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A
CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY,
GUIDING MEN TO THEIR
ETERNAL SALVATION.

(IN TWO PARTS.)

THE FIRST PART WHEREOF APPERTAINS TO RESOLUTION ;
THE SECOND TREATS OF THE OBSTACLES AND
IMPEDIMENTS WHICH HINDER IT, AND
HOW THEY MAY BE REMOVED.

NOW SET FORTH
WITH MANY CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

TO THIS EDITION ARE PREFIXED

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND

A METHOD FOR THE USE OF ALL,

WITH TWO TABLES.

BY THE REV. ROBERT PARSONS,

PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

What doth it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul ?
Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul ?—*Mat. xvi. ver. 26.*
O ye Sons of Men, &c., why do ye love Vanity ?—*Psaln iv. ver. 3.*
But one thing is necessary.—*Luke x. ver. 42.*

NEW-YORK :

D. MURPHY & SON, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS,
No. 384 PEARL STREET

1851.

TO THE

RIGHT REV. ANDREW BYRNE,

BISHOP OF LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS,

*This work is most respectfully dedicated, as a testimony
to his unaffected piety—his zeal and devotion in the cause
of Religion—and the amiableness and urbanity of his man-
ners as a Clergyman and a Gentleman,*

By his obliged,

And humble Servant,

THE PUBLISHER.

PREFACE.

CHRISTIAN READER,

THE Book I offer to your perusal has already appeared in so many editions, and so often passed through the world with that applause, with which solid piety will always meet, that it would be needless to detain you in showing the value of a work, the perusal of which will force the readers to become its panegyrists, not only by the praise they will allow it in their discourse, but much more solidly by the change in their manners, and resolutions of a virtuous life. For it is almost impossible that any one should read it with a serious attention, without being penetrated with such sentiments of his duty, as will make him resolve on the practice of whatever is necessary to fulfil it, and attain that great end to which we are all born, which is—to love and serve God in this world and enjoy him in the next.

This was the intention of the author in first publishing the book : and God Almighty has blessed his pious designs with such an extraordinary success, that, I dare say, few or none have perused it with attention, but have been seriously moved to a reform of their manners by returning from vice, or confirmed in a regular way of living by the practice of virtue.

This is also my intention in offering to you this new edition. God grant it meet with the like success ; and that the spirit of the author still exciting in the reader those sentiments of Christianity which he breathes in every line, I may have some share in the reward of his good works, having by this edition made myself in some sort a partaker of his labor.

The reasons which first engaged the pious and learned author to undertake this work, was the love of God and his neighbour. The continual crimes of that dissolute age, by which a perverse generation not only offended, but insulted and blasphemed their Creator, struck deep into a heart inflamed with the love of God ; and the deplorable blindness of numberless Christians, who having in those days abandoned at once the principles of morality and religion, ran on thoughtless to their eternal ruin, could not but draw tears of compassion from one who had deeply rooted in him that favourite precept of his divine Master, *John* xv. that commandment which he calls his own ; the observance of which he gives as a characteristic of his Disciples, that commandment I say, by which every Christian is taught to love his neighbour as himself.

He tells us, in the eighth chapter of the second part of this book, the causes of the dissolute licentiousness of those days were chiefly two. The first, division, schism, and heresy in matters of faith, which by raising many doubts, and by contentious quarrels, wearing out man's wit, brings him at length to care for no religion, but rather to condemn all. The second, inordinate love of the world, and those things which are of the world, which brings men even to hate God, and rank themselves with those whom the Apostles call "Enemies of the Cross of Christ." *Phil. iii.*

Would to God the same causes did not continue to produce in these our days the like effects ! but I fear I may apply to our age, without danger of being impeached of scandal, that saying of the Roman Poet, *Ætas parentum pejor avis*, &c. Religion is almost disputed out of doors, barefaced *Deism* does not only triumph in every bookseller's stall ; but much more diffusive and loud in those public meetings, where numbers who have been baptised in the Church of Christ forswear each day the sacred bonds by which at their regeneration, they were made part of his flock, and blasphemed that very religion, of which they were so solemnly sworn members.

It is no wonder that all Christian virtues should be discarded where all religion is. Nature will always prevail, where virtue is not grounded on solid principle : and no laws are capable of restraining the will where no conviction is sufficient to fix the understanding. Hence this universal misfortune of our age, in which we see that an unbounded license of framing even anti-christian systems in regard to the law of God, has ushered in an unwarrantable liberty of transgressing the most essential precepts of the lawgiver.

The assertion is fact : and I am sorry barefaced wickedness makes it so clear ; I need not instance particulars to convince the reader. If he has any sentiments of religion left, his ears must be continually shocked with the grossest blasphemy against our Redeemer ; and if he has not quite worn out his morals, he must glow with a perpetual blush, at the sight of those crimes which insult his God, and damn his neighbour.

In these deplorable circumstances I know not what better preservative I can offer against the growing distemper than this treatise—the author thought it the most proper remedy for the like evil in his days.

He has divided it into two parts, corresponding to the two causes of the dissolute licentiousness he condemns. The first cause being a carelessness and almost utter contempt of religion ; in the first part of this book, having solidly established against the *Atheist* the existence of a Supreme Being, or God ; and thence by an undeniable consequence inferred the obligation incumbent on man to love and serve him ; he proves no less solidly against the *Freethinker* and *Deist*, that the only religion in which we can discharge this our duty, is and must be the evangelical dispensation, which is the law of Christ.

But whereas the profession of christian faith will avail little towards

salvation, unless the integrity of our life corresponds with the sincerity of our belief, that is, unless we practice the religion we profess; he lays down rules by which even the most simple may discern whether he is a true Christian, both as to the profession of his faith, and the practice of his life.

He avoids purposely such points of controversy as were occasioned by divisions and novelties in matters of faith, to insist chiefly on the duties of a christian life, being convinced that if he could banish from our hearts the love of vice, he should soon remove the obstinacy of error from our understanding.

To this end, having in the sixth chapter made it incontestable, that the practical duty of a Christian consists in avoiding sin, and embracing virtue, according to that of the Psalmist—"Turn away from evil and do good." *Psalm xxxiii.* He employs the remaining chapters in convincing us of the necessity we lie under of conforming our lives to this duty; which he does most persuasively, by laying before our eyes the grievousness of sin, and that terrible day of account in which God will judge all our actions; drawing from thence such motives as will frighten us into our duty, if we cannot be allured to it by the greatness of the rewards, which will be the everlasting recompense of those who adore, love, and serve God in spirit and verity.

Having thus, in the first part of this book, established the certainty of christian religion, and the indispensable obligation every one lies under of conforming to it: in the second part which corresponds to the other cause of the wickedness he complains of in those days, he removes all the difficulties which may hinder such as are convinced of their obligation, from a steady resolution of coming to the practice; and therein not only shows the deceitfulness and vanity of the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world to draw our hearts from a criminal attachment to it; but discovers the snares by which the infernal enemy endeavors to make us defer, at least, the amendment of our life, when he finds he can no longer disguise to us the importance of that great duty. In which performance he so reconciles the severity of God's judgments with the greatness of his mercies, that whilst he deters us from presuming on the mercies of God, by a show of his justice, he arms us against despair, by minding us of his goodness.

Both ought to be puissant motives to our duty. Whilst the judgments of God make us tremble with fear, his bounties will inflame us with love; these will raise in us gratitude, those fill us with terror, that what we owe to our Creator may be the effect of a wholesome fear, if it is not the return of a grateful love.

Take, therefore, christian reader, and peruse this book, not with the curiosity with which you devour a novel, but with such attention as the main business of your eternal welfare requires. Consider seriously and reflect often on the importance of this grand affair. It is the sole affair

for which you were placed in this world; and it is the end for which you were created. If you deviate from this end, an unavailing repentance will be your doom.

It is now in your power to secure to yourself everlasting happiness, by turning away from evil and doing good. The perusal of this treatise will supply you with motives to both, by convincing you of your obligations and making them easy to you. May the holy grace of God guide your thoughts and move your heart, that being directed in the ways of our Lord by the knowledge of these great truths, you may walk constantly in his paths by the practice of virtue.

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

ROBERT PARSONS was born at Nether Stowey, near Bridgewater, in Somertshire, anno 1546; his father was a yeoman of good repute; who, though he was carried away with the stream in those boisterous times, was reconciled again to the Catholic Church by the means of Alexander Briant, a zealous missionary, educated at Doway, and afterwards condemned, and executed upon account of his character. His mother, who had been a great sufferer for her faith, lived to see many years, and died in London about 1599. Robert, her son, was educated from his childhood by the care, and at the expense of John Hayward, vicar of Nether-Stowey; who had formerly been a regular canon. This learned curate, observing his pupil to have parts far above the common, was himself at the pains of grounding him in the classics; and when he was fit for academical learning, sent him to Baliol college in Oxford, about the latter end of 1563; he quickly became one of the smartest disputants of his standing; and sometime in 1568, was made B. A. and the same year probationer fellow of the college. In Michaelmas term, 1572, he was admitted M. A. fellow of the college, and became a noted tutor. Soon after, having entertained some scruples concerning the reformed religion, he took a resolution to quit the party: but first, he would acquaint his great friend and patron John Hayward; who being himself a kind of an occasionalist, approved of the design. Upon which Mr. Parsons, as the records of the college do testify, spontaneously surrendered his fellowship, February 13, 1574, and the same year leaving England, he passed by the way of Calais to Antwerp, where he made no long stay, but proceeded to Louvain. Here he became acquainted with William Good, an English Jesuit, whom he consulted about chosing a state of life. Mr. Parsons had a great inclination for physic; and had of late employed some time in that study, designing to proceed in it. Upon this view he went to Padua; where, besides physic, he endeavoured to acquire some knowledge of the more useful parts of the civil law. But his studies being interrupted by a journey to Rome, the impressions he had received from Father Good at Louvain, worked so strongly upon him, that he entered among the Jesuits, July 4, 1575. We hear little of him afterwards, till the year 1580, when Providence drew him out of his retirement for action, and distinguished him on several remarkable occasions. The first was upon his going over into England upon the mission; which none of that

order had hitherto attempted; but now engaged in it at the request of Dr. Allen; who having experienced the benefit England had received from the clergy he sent yearly into that country since 1568, proposed to the General of the Jesuits that some of his order might be employed in the same way. For though about sixty-nine of the subjects of the British dominions had been admitted into the Jesuits' order, since the death of their founder in 1556, and some of them sent to preach in other kingdoms, not one had visited England till 1588, that Mr. Parsons and Mr. Campion were ordered thither. Campion was taken prisoner, condemned and executed; Parsons narrowly escaping, fled over into France before he had been an entire year on the mission. Providence it seems had designed him for carrying on that work after another manner. He had not been long in France before he found means to erect a grammar school in Normandy, for the instruction of young men of the English nation, in order to prepare them for higher studies in the colleges at Rheims and Rome, and completed this matter about the year 1582; but this establishment was of no long duration. Their subsistence was chiefly by contributions, which failing; and being daily disturbed by the civil wars in those parts they were obliged to break up; the students returning, some to Rheims, from whence they came, others to other places, till a school was erected some years after at St. Omers, for the same purpose. This disappointment carried Father Parsons to Rome, where he was made Rector of the English College, anno 1587. A few years after, being sent to Spain, he made such interest at Court as to bring about several establishments for the benefit of the English, viz. at Valledolid, Seville, St. Omers, Madrid; besides two residences for chaplains at St. Lucar's and Lisbon. These foundations being completed, Father Parsons returned to Rome; and either re-entered or was re-chosen once more Rector of the English College; which place he enjoyed till his death, which happened April 15, 1610.

He was as to his person of a middle size, his complexion rather swarthy, which, with strong features, made his countenance somewhat forbidding—but his address, and the agreeableness of his conversation, quickly worked off the aversion. The superiority of his genius, and the natural turn he had for business, gave him a place among the great men of the age. His thoughts were penetrating, and his judgment solid, and well regulated; and which are two necessary qualifications in a projector, he was calm upon consultation, and patient under disappointments. He had read much, made many collections, and was happy in their application; and was so great a master of the English tongue, that as none excelled him in that age, so his works may be still read with pleasure. He was irreproachable as to his morals, and very exact in all the duties of his profession.

A

CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

Of the many dangers worldings run into for the want of consideration, and how necessary it is for every man to enter into serious thoughts of his own state whilst he has time.

THE prophets and saints of Almighty God, who from time to time have been sent by his merciful providence to advertise and warn sinners of their perilous state and condition, have not only foretold them their wickedness, and dangers imminent for the same ; but also have revealed the causes thereof, whereby they might the better provide a remedy against the inconveniences which from thence ensue. Such is the charitable proceeding of our most merciful Lord with the children of men.

The charitable proceeding of God by his prophets.

Among other causes, none is more general, or more often alleged, than the want of consideration ; by which common snare and deceit of our adversary, most men fall into sin, and remain in the same, to their final destruction and eternal perdition. So Isaiah the prophet, speaking of the careless nobility and gentry of Jewry, that gave themselves to banqueting and mirth, without consideration of their duties towards God, repeats often the threat of *woe* against them ; and then puts down the cause in these words : ‘ Harp, and viol, and timbrel, and shalm, and wine in your feasts ; and the work of our Lord you regard not, nor consider the work of his hands.—Therefore hath hell dilated his soul, and opened his mouth without any limit, and the strong ones, and their people, and their high and glorious ones shall descend into it.’

The danger of inconsiderateness.

Isaiah v. The sensual life of the Jewish gentry.

Here are two causes, as you see, and two effects linked together, of these Jews damnation. the one depending on the

other. For as good cheer and sensuality brought these men to live without considering God's works, and proceedings towards sinners; so inconsiderateness brought them to the mouth of hell. I say, that inconsiderateness of God's works towards sinners, brought them to this peril, for it follows in the very same place. 'And the Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and the holy God shall be sanctified in justice;' as if he had said, though you will not now consider God's judgments and justice amidst the heat and pleasure of your feastings, yet shall he, by exercising the same upon you hereafter, be known, exalted, and sanctified throughout the world.

God himself addresses the like discourse by the same prophet, to the daughter of Babylon, and by her to every sinful and sensual soul figured by that name. *Isaiah* xvlii, 'Come down,' says he, 'sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon,—Thou hast said, I will be a lady for ever, thou hast not put these things on thy heart, neither hast thou remembered thy end. And now hear these things, thou that art delicate and dwellest confidently. These two things shall come suddenly to thee in one day—Evil shall come upon thee, and thou shalt not know the rising thereof: and calamity shall fall violently upon thee which thou canst not expiate: misery shall come upon thee suddenly,' &c.

Holy Jeremiah, after he had weighed with himself what miseries for sin the prophets *Isaiah*, *Amos*, *Hosea*, *Joel*, *Abdias*, *Micheas*, *Nahum*, *Sophonias* and himself (all which prophets lived within the compass of one hundred years) had foretold to be impendent not only over Samaria and the ten tribes of Israel, which were now already carried into banishment to the furthest parts of the east, but also over the states and countries that most flourished at that time, as Babylon, Egypt, Damascus, Tyrus, Sidon, Moab, and finally over Jerusalem and Judea itself,* which he foresaw would soon after be destroyed; when he saw also by long experience that neither his words, nor the words and cries of the other prophets, could move the hearts of wicked men; he broke forth into this most lamentable complaint: *Jer.* xii. 'With desolation is all the land made desolate; because there is none that considereth in the heart.'

Jeremiah made this complaint out of compassion of his people, that ran miserably to perdition for want of consideration.

* *Jer.* iv. xv. and xvii.

And the same complaint, with much reason, may every good christian make at this time, for the infinite souls of such as perish daily by inconsiderateness. Whereby, as by a general and irremediable enchantment many thousand souls are lulled asleep, and find themselves within the gates of hell, before they think of any such inconvenience; being led through the vale of this present life, as it were blindfolded; by careless negligence, like beasts to the slaughter-house; and never permitted to see their own danger, until it is too late to remedy the same.

God says by the mouth of Isaiah; *Isaiah* v. 'therefore is my people led away captive because they had not knowledge—Therefore has hell dilated his soul, and opened his mouth, without any limit, and their strong ones, and their people, and their high and glorious ones shall descend into it.' Will you see what a mystery and sealed secret this is? hearken then how another describes the same, and with what circumstances: *Job* iv. 'Furthermore,' says he, 'A certain hidden word was spoken unto me, and mine ear, *The mystery of in-* as it were by stealth, received the veins of his *consider-* whispering: it was in the horror of a vision by *ateness.* night, when dead sleep is wont to possess men. Fear came upon me and trembling, and all my bones were extremely terrified. At length a spirit passed by in my presence, whereat the hairs of my flesh stood up in horror. There stood before me one whose face I knew not. His image was before mine eyes, and I heard his voice, as the sound of a soft air.'

Hitherto is described in what manner and order this secret was revealed: but now, what said this vision, or spirit, think you at the last? truly he made a short discourse, to prove, by the fall of the angels for their sin, that much more (*Ibid*) 'They that inhabit houses of clay,' as all mortal men do whose bodies are of flesh, 'which have an earthly foundation of earth,' as most people of this world have, that put their confidence in things of this life, 'shall be consumed, as it were of the moth: from morning until evening;' within less space, perhaps, than there is from morning to night, 'they shall be cut down,' when they think least of it.

And to shew that herein stands a point of high secrecy (I mean, to consider and ponder well this discourse) he makes his conclusion in these words immediately following: *Psalms* xci. 'And because none (of those men beforementioned who have such earthly foundations) *Want of consideration cause of eternal destruction.* understand they shall perish forever:

And this is a secret which few men will believe : ‘The unwise
A point that fools will not consider. ‘man will not know, and the fool will not understand
 ‘these things,’ says the royal prophet. But what
 things ? it ensues in the same place : how wonder-
 ful the works of God, and how deep his cogitations
 are about sinners, who spring up as grass, and flourish in this
 world, ‘that they may perish for ever.’

The prophet Daniel had many visions and strange revela-
 tions of great and high mysteries : but one amongst all
 others, and this not the least, of the most dreadful judgment
 of God upon sinners in the end of the world : *Dan. x.* The
A most terrible vision of Daniel wherein he saw Christ. vision was by the great river *Tigris* ; where as di-
 vers angels were attending about the banks, one
 in the likeness of a man, of exceeding dreadful ma-
 jesty, stood upon the water. His apparel was only
 linen, through which his body shined like precious
 stones, his eyes like burning lamps, his face like flashing
 lightning, his arms and legs like brass inflamed, and his voice
 as the shout of a whole multitude of people that should speak
 together.

This was Christ, by all interpretation, at whose terrible
 presence, when Daniel fell down as dead, he was erected
 again by an angel, and made strong to abide the vision :
 and so having heard and seen the most wonderful things,
 which in his book he recounts ; he was bold to ask a question
 or two for better understanding thereof : and his first question
 was, *Dan. xii.* ‘How long to the end of these wonders ?’
 whereunto the man upon the water answered, by stretching
 out both his arms to heaven, and swearing by him that liveth
 for ever and ever, that it should be ‘a time, and times, and
 the half of a time.’ Which answer, Daniel not understand-
 ing, began to question further ; but he was cut off with this
 answer : ‘Go, Daniel, because these words are shut up and
 ‘sealed until the appointed time.’ And yet, for his further
 instruction, it was added in the same place : ‘the impious
 ‘shall do impiously, and none of the impious shall under-
 ‘stand,’ these mysteries, though we should never so much ex-
 pound them.

Wilful ignorance. Whereby, as by all the rest, that hitherto has
 been alleged, is made apparent, that inconsiderate-
 ness, negligence, careless ignorance, and want of understand-
 ing our own state, and God’s judgments and proceedings
 with iniquity and sin, have been a bane, and a common per-
 dition of careless men from time to time.

And if we will turn our eyes to this our age, much more shall we see the same to be true. *The cause of so much sin at this day.* For what is the cause, think you, why, at this day, we have so many of those people whom one of Job's friends calls abominable, *Job xv.* that drink up iniquity as beasts do water; that commit all sin, all injustice, all turpitude, without remorse or scruple of conscience? what is the cause of this, I say, but want of consideration, want of understanding, want of knowledge? For, as Christ said to Jerusalem concerning her destruction, so may we say to these sinners: *Luke xix.* If thou also, O sinful soul, didst know what hangs over thy head for this careless life of thine: *Isaiah xlvii.* If thou, daughter of Babylon, wouldst remember, and ponder in thy heart, what will be the end of these thy delights, thou wouldst not live so pleasantly as thou dost. *Luke xix.* 'But now,' says Christ, 'these things are hidden from thine eyes.'

Not, but that thou mayest have known them, if thou would'st: but because thou art one of them, *Voluntary inconsiderateness.* who say to God: *Job xxi.* 'We will not the knowledge of thy ways.' One of them, *Job xxiv.* 'that have been rebellious to the light' and illumination of God's grace. One of them, *Psalms xxxv.* 'that would not understand that he might do well.' And finally one of them, of whom the wise man says, *Prov. xxviii.* 'He that turns away his ears from hearing the law, his prayers shall be execrable' and detestable in the sight of his maker.

Truly, nothing in reason can be less tolerable in the presence of God's majesty, than, whereas he has published a law unto us,* with so great a charge to bear it in mind, to ponder it in heart, to study and meditate upon it both day and night, at home and abroad morning and evening; to make it the object of our thoughts, our discourse, our talk, our exercise, our meditation, and our delight; that we should notwithstanding, so condemn the same, as to give to it no part of our thought, but rather fly the knowledge thereof; as we see most men of the world do, not to trouble their consciences.

But the Holy Ghost has laid down the reason *The first cause why foolish men fly consideration.* hereof long ago in these words: *Sap. xvii.* 'For whereas wickedness is fearful, it giveth testimony of condemnation; for a troubled conscience does always presume evil things,' whensoever it thinks of the

* Deut. vi. and xi. Jos. i. Psalm cxviii. Eccles. vi. and xxiii.

law of God, or of honesty. So Felix, the governor of Jewry, when St. Paul began to talk of justice, chastity, and God's judgments before him, was wonderfully afraid, and said to Paul, *Acts xxiv.* 'For this time go thy way; but in 'time convenient I will send for thee:' but he never did; and what was the cause? for that as Josephus testifies,* he was a wicked man; and Drusilla his lady, that was with him at St. Paul's speech, was not his true wife, but taken by allure-ment and violence from another; and therefore it offended them both, to hear preaching of chastity.

The second cause why men fly consideration. This then is one principal cause why men of this world will not enter into consideration of their own state, and of God's commandments, lest they should read and see their own faults, and bear against themselves witness of their own condemnation. Where-unto the scripture annexes another cause, not far unlike to this, which is, that worldly men do so drown themselves in the cares and solitudes of this life, that they leave in their minds no place to think of their eternal concern; which is the business of their own souls. This Jeremiah the prophet expresses most effectually, when having made his complaint, *Jer. vii.* that notwithstanding his preaching and crying in the temple-gate, for a long time together, where all the people passed by him and heard him; yet no man, says he, would enter into consideration, or say with himself, *Jer. viii.* 'what have I done?' whereof he adds presently the cause and reason; 'They are all turned to their own course, as a horse 'going with violence to battle. The kite in the air hath 'known her time; the turtle, and the swallow, and the stork, 'have observed the time of their coming; but my people 'have not known the judgment of the Lord.' By which comparison the Holy Ghost expresses very lively the irreco-verable state of a settled worldly man, that follows greedily his own designs in his worldly concerns, without thinking of the judgments of God.

These then are two of the chief causes of inconsiderateness, to wit, wilful aversion from the laws of God, for fear of seeing their own danger, and continual occupation in the vanities of this life. And yet the scripture mentions a third *Third cause of inconsiderateness.* sort of inconsiderate men, who neither deliberately, nor also by reason of too many occupations in world-ly affairs, neglect consideration; but rather out of a certain

* Joseph. lib. 20. antiq. cap. 5.

levity and idle negligence: because they will not trouble their heads with any thing but sports and recreations, of whom it is written; *Sap.* xv. ‘They esteemed our life to be a past time.’ And in another place of the same men, *Eccles.* viii. They live as securely and confidently, without care or thought, as if they had the good works of just men to stand for them. But as the Holy Ghost pronounces in the same place, ‘this is ‘vanity and folly in the highest degree.’

For as in things of this life, he would be but a foolish merchant, who for quiet sake would never look into his account-books, to see whether he is behind hand, or prospers in his trade: and as that ship-master would greatly be to blame, who, to avoid care, would sit down and make good cheer, and let the ship go whither she would: so, much more in the business of our soul, is it madness and folly, to fly consideration to avoid trouble; seeing in the end this negligence must needs turn upon us much more trouble, and irre-

*In the end
evil men
shall un-
derstand
whether
they will
or no.*

mediable calamities. For as Jeremiah says to all such men: *Jer.* xxx. In the latter days you shall ‘understand these things,’ which now, for fear of ‘giving yourself any trouble, you will not take the pains to think of. But when do you think this will be? he tells you plainly in the same place: when the fury of our Lord shall come forth as a whirlwind, and shall rush, and rest upon your heads as a tempest; then you shall know and understand these things. And in another chapter he says, *Jer.* xxiii. ‘Behold the whirlwind of the Lord’s indignation ‘shall come forth, and a tempest breaking out; it shall come ‘upon the head of the impious. The fury of the Lord shall ‘not return until he do it, and till he accomplish the cogitation of his heart: in the latter days you shall understand his ‘counsel.’

It seems that the Babylonians were a people very faulty in this point of consideration, as all wealthy people are, because before the most terrible destruction of that great city, by the Medes and Persians, God cried unto her in these words, *Isaiah* xxi. ‘Babylon my beloved is made a miracle unto me. Lay the table, behold in ‘the watch tower them that eat and drink: arise, ye princes, ‘take shield, for thus hath our Lord said unto me; go and set ‘a watchman; and whatsoever he shall see let him tell.’ And then there was a watchman set upon the walls, and a lion, to denounce with open mouth, whatsoever danger, he saw coming towards them. ‘And a lion cried out, I am

*The exam-
ple of the
Babyloni-
ans.*

• upon the watch tower of our Lord, standing continually by ‘day ; and I am upon my ward standing whole nights,’ &c. And in the same chapter God taught the people to cry in this sort to their sentinel or watchman : ‘ Watchman, what of the night ! Watchman, what of the night ? That is, O sentinel, what seest thou coming towards us ? what danger espiest thou drawing on us in the darkness,’ &c.—By all which cir-

We must stand upon our watch. cumstances, what else is insinuated, but that God would have us stand upon our watch, for that his judgments are to come upon the world by night, when men least think thereof ? they are to come as a thief at midnight, as also in another place we are admonished ; and therefore happy is the man that shall be found watchful.

But now the sole entrance into this watch, whereon the security of our eternal life depends, can be nothing else but consideration. For that, where no consideration is, there can be no watch, nor foresight, nor knowledge of our state ; and consequently no hope of salvation, as holy St. Bernard holds ;* which thing caused that blessed man to write five whole books of consideration to Eugenius.

Consideration is the thing which brings us to know both God and ourselves. And touching God, it lays before us his majesty, his mercy, his judgments, his commandments, his promises, his threatenings, his proceedings with other men before us, whereby we may gather what we also, in time, must expect at his hand.

The many commodities of consideration. And for ourselves, consideration is the key that opens the door to the closet of our heart, where all our books of account do lie : it is the looking-glass, or rather the very eye of our souls, whereby she takes a view of herself, and looks into all her own estate ; into her riches, her debts, her duties, her negligences ; her good gifts, her defects, her safety, her danger ; the way she walks in, the course she follows, the peace she holds, and finally, the place and end whereto she draws. And without this consideration, she runs headlong into a thousand troubles and difficulties, stumbling every step into some inconvenience or other ; and continually in peril of some great and deadly mischief.

And it is truly wonderful, that in all other business of this life, men can see and confess that nothing can be either begun, prosecuted, or well ended without consideration ; and yet in this great affair of gaining heaven, or falling into hell, few think consideration greatly necessary to be used.

* Bern. lib. i. de consid.

I might here show the infinite other effects and commodities of consideration, as that it is the watch or alarm-bell, and stirs up and awakes all the powers of our mind; the fuel that nourishes the fire of our devotion; the blast that kindles and inflames the same; the spur that forwards us to all virtuous, zealous, and heroical acts; and the very thing that gives both light and life, and motion to the soul.

Effects of consideration.

Our faith is confirmed and increased by consideration of God's works and miracles; our hope by consideration of his promises, and of the true performance thereof to all them that ever trusted in him; our charity or love of God, by consideration of his benefits and innumerable deserts towards us: our humility by consideration of his greatness, and of our own infirmities; our courage and fortitude, by contemplation of his assistance in all we undertake for his honour; our contempt of the world, by consideration of the eternal joys of heaven; and so all other virtues, both moral and divine, do take their heat and quickening, and vital spirit from consideration.

How all virtues are stirred up and quickened by consideration.

By the exercise of consideration and meditation, holy David says, *Psal.* xxxviii. that he felt a burning fire to flame within his breast; that is the fire of zeal, the fire of fervour in religion, the fire of devotion, the fire of love towards God and his neighbour. And in another place he says, *Psal.* xxxviii. That by the same exercise he swept and purged his own spirit, which is to be understood from the dust of this world, from the dregs of sin, from the contamination and coinquination of human creatures, because consideration indeed is the very fan that severs and drives away the chaff from the corn.

For which cause we shall never read of any holy man from the beginning of the world, neither before Christ nor after, who used not much and familiarly this most blessed exercise of consideration and pondering. And for the first three patriarchs, it will be sufficient to remember the custom of young Isaac recorded in Genesis, *Gen.* xxiv. which was to go forth towards night into the fields, *ad meditandum*, that is to meditate, consider, and ponder upon the works and judgments, and commandments of God. And this he did yet being but a child and unmarried, (far different from the custom of young gentlemen now-a-days, who frequent the fields to follow their vanities :) and as Isaac could not have this custom, but from his father Abraham; so no doubt but he

The exercise of holy men touching consideration.

The first three patriarchs.

taught the same to his son *Jacob*, and *Jacob* again to his posterity.

And as for Moses and his successor Joshua, it may easily be imagined how they used this exercise by the most earnest exhortations,* which they made thereof to others in their speeches and writings. The good kings of Judah also, notwithstanding their many great temporal affairs, do testify of themselves how they used this exercise, as David almost every where says, *Psal.* xxxviii. that the commandments of God were his daily meditation, and not only by day, ‘all the day, and every day; in the morning, and seven times a day:’ but also he insinuates his custom of meditation by night: *Ps.* lxxvi. lxii. cxviii. ‘I did meditate by night in my heart,’ upon thy commandments, O Lord; signifying hereby, both his watchfulness by night when other men were asleep, and the hearty care that he had of this exercise which we esteem so little.

Solomon also, king David’s son, as long as he lived in the grace and favour of God, observed this exercise of his father, and exhorts other men to it: *Eccles.* vi. ‘Let,’ says he, ‘thy thoughts be upon the precepts of God, and meditate continually on his commandments; and he will give thee a heart, and the desire of wisdom shall be given to thee.’ Which if himself had continued still, it is likely he had never fallen from God by women as he did. The good king Hezekiah, is reported to have meditated like a dove, that is, in silence and solitariness with himself alone; which is the true way of profitable meditation. Isaiah testifies of his own watching by night in this exercise, and how he did the same, saying, *Isaiah* xxvi. ‘My soul hath desired thee in the night; yea, and with my spirit within me in the morning early I will watch to thee.’

The consideration that Job used, and the fruits thereof.

Holy Job makes mention, not only of his manner of considering, but what also he considered, and what effect he found in himself by the same. First he considered, as I said, the ways, footsteps, and commandments of God, and then his dreadful power, *Job* xxiii. ‘For,’ says he, ‘he is alone, and no man can turn away his cogitation; and whatsoever his soul would, that has he done: and therefore I am troubled at his face, and considering him, I am made pensive with fear.’ In which words he insinuates two most excellent

* Deut. vi. and i. Jos. xi.

effects of consideration : first, the fear of God, of which it is written, *Isaiah xxxii.* ‘ The fear of our Lord, that is his treasure ;’ and the second, that ‘ by this fear he was made solicitous, watchful, and diligent in God’s service, of which the prophet Micheas says thus, *Mich. vi.* ‘ I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what our Lord requires of thee : *verily*, to do judgment and to love mercy, and to walk solicitous with thy God.’

But O ! thou holy and blessed man Job, did this exercise of consideration bring forth in thee so great fear and terror of God, and so careful watchfulness in the observance of his commandments ?

now I see well the cause, why thou writest of thyself, that *thou didst doubt and fear all thy works and actions, were they never so circumspect. But what shall we say now-a-days, most happy saint, who do not fear even our own dissolute, careless, and inordinate actions ; who feel no terror of God at all, nor do use any watchfulness in observing his commandments ? truly this proceeds from nothing else but inconsideration ; it proceeds from want of knowledge both of God and of ourselves. For doubtless, if we knew either of these two things aright (as indeed neither of them can be well understood without the other) it could not be, but that many of us would change our wrong courses.

O merciful Lord, what sinful man in the world would live as he does, if he knew either thee or himself as he should do ? I mean if he considered what thou art, and what thou hast been to others, that lived and continued in sin, as he does ? Not without great cause, that holy †doctor of thy church, cried so often and earnestly to thee, for obtaining these points at thy hands : *ut cognoscam te, ut cognoscam me* : that I may know thee, and that I may know myself, says he : that is, that I may consider and feel the true knowledge thereof, for many men do know, but to little profit and advantage.

We know and believe in gross the mysteries of our faith, that there is a God who rewards good and good and evil, that he is terrible in his counsels upon the sons of men ; that there is a hell for sinners, a heaven for good livers, a most dreadful day of judgment to come, a strait account to be demanded, and the like : all this we know and believe in general, as merchandize wrapped up together in a bundle. But because we unfold not these things, nor medi-

* Job ix.

† Aug. in lib. confes.

tate upon them in particular ; because we let them not known unto our hearts, nor ruminate on them with leisure and attention ; because we chew them not well in our mind, by a deep consideration, nor digest them in our heart, by the

A simili- heat of meditation ; they remain with us a sword
tude.

in the scabbard, and help us as little unto a good life, for which they were revealed, as a preservative in our pocket, never applied, can help our health. We bear the general knowledge of these mysteries locked up in our breasts, as sealed bags of treasure that we never counted nor opened ; and consequently we have neither feeling, sense, or motion imparted to us thereby : even as a man may carry fire about him in a flint stone without heat ; and perfumes in a pomander without smell ; except the one be beaten, and the other chafed.

The impor- All depends then, good reader, on this one point,
tance of for the direction of ourselves in this life, and for
considera- reaping benefit by the mysteries of our faith and re-
tion. ligious ; that we allot ourselves time to meditate,

ponder and consider what these things do teach us. For as the sick man that has most excellent remedies and precious potions set before him, could expect no profit or ease thereby, if he only did look upon them, or smelt them, or took them into his mouth alone, or should cast them forth off his stomach again, before they were settled or had time to work their operation ; even so is it in this case of ours. And therefore with great reason St. Paul said to Timothy, after he had taught him a long lesson : 1 *Tim.* iv. ‘Meditate, consider, ‘and ponder upon these things which I have showed you :’ as if in other words he had said, all that hitherto I have told you or written for your instruction, and all that ever you have heard or learned besides, will avail you nothing for your salvation, except you meditate and ponder upon the same, and do suck out the juice thereof, by frequent consideration.

The con- Wherefore, to conclude this chapter, my dear
clusion of and well-beloved brother, seeing consideration is so
the chapter. precious and profitable, so needful and necessary a thing as has been declared ; I thought it convenient in this first front and entrance of my book, to place the mention and diligent recommendation thereof, as of a thing most requisite for all that follows. For without consideration, neither what I have said already, nor any thing else, that will or can be

said hereafter, can yield thee profit, as by most lamentable experience, we see daily in the world, where many millions of men pass over their whole age, without reaping any profit of so many good books, so many preach-^{The misery of the world.} ings, so many virtuous examples, so many terrible chastisements of God upon sinners, which every where they see before their face. But yet, because they will not, or have not leisure, or dare not, or have not grace to enter into consideration thereof; they pass over all, as sick men do pills, diverting, as much as they can, both their eyes and thoughts, from all such matters as are ungrateful unto them.

But as good Jeremiah says, *Jer. xxiii. xxx.* The time will come when they will be forced to see and know and consider these things, when perhaps it will be too late to reap great comfort or consolation thereby. Wherefore, dear brother, that which perforce thou must do in time to come, and that perchance to thy greater damnation (I mean, to enter into consideration of thine own state) do that now willingly to thy comfort and merit, to prepare the way to thy salvation. Prevent the day and redeem the time, according to St. Paul's wise counsel, *Ephes. v.* Run not headlong with the world to perdition: stay some time, as holy Jeremiah admonishes thee, *Jer. vii.* and say to thyself, *What do I?* whither do I go? what will be my end? Take some time from thy pleasures, and from the company of thy pleasant friends, to do this; although it be with some loss of pastime and recreation: for I do assure thee it will recompense itself in the end, and make thee joyful when thy laughing friends will weep.

The effect of all the considerations that ensue, is, *Effect of all rightly to know God, for by knowing him we shall know ourselves, and all things else, which are necessary for us to know; and without knowing him, all knowledge in the world is vanity and mere folly.* *John xvii. Hæc est vita æterna,* says Christ to his father, *ut te cognoscant solum Deum verum: et quem misisti Jesum Christum.* This is life everlasting: that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

God's nature and essence we cannot know in this life; but the only way to know God in this world, is to know his majesty, to know his mercy, to know his justice, to know his judgments; to know his hatred to sin, his favour to the good, his benefits, and promises to all: his grace, his threats, his ways, his commandments, his dealings towards other men before us, all which things the considera-

tions following do set before our eyes, and consequently, they do teach us to know God aright. Read then therefore, dear brother, with attention : and remember the words that God uses to us all, *Psal. xlv. Vacate, at videte, quoniam ego sum Deus.* Take leisure, and consider that I am God. It must not be done in haste ; nor as the fashion is, for curiosity only, to read three or four leaves in one place, and so in another ; but it must be done with such serious attention, as appertains to so great a business, which in truth is the weightiest affair, that possibly under heaven, can be taken in hand. It is the business whereof Christ is to be especially understood, when he said, *Luke x. Unum est necessarium ;* one only thing is necessary, Because all other things in this world are but trifles, in comparison to this alone, which, of itself, is of more importance than all the rest together

CHAPTER II.

That there is a God who rewards good and evil ; against all Atheists of old and modern times ; with the proofs alleged for the same, both by Jew and Gentile.

SECT. I.—*Every part of the Creation shows there is a God.*

A common custom in sciences to suppose principles.

It is a thing both common and ordinary in sciences and arts, when they are learned or delivered by others, to suppose divers points and principles, and to pass them over without proof, as either known before to the learner, or else so manifest, easy, and evident of themselves, that they need no other proof, than only declaring them.

An example in chivalry.

So when we take in hand to instruct a man in chivalry or feats of arms, we suppose that he knows before, were he ever so rude, what a man, what a horse, what armour, what fighting means ; as also that war is lawful and expedient in divers cases ; that princes of the world may wage the same ; that soldiers are bound to live in order and discipline under their regiment ; and that for this reason, kings entertain generals, colonels, captains, and other like officers in their pay, and keep them in garrisons, camps and armies, to see due order observed.

In handy-crafts.

In manual arts and occupations likewise it is evident, that divers things must be presupposed to be foreknown by the learner ; as in husbandry or agriculture, in

building, in painting, and other such exercises ; when a man is to be taught or instructed, it would not be convenient for the teacher, to stand upon every point or matter that appertains to the same, but he must leave and pass over many things, as apparent of themselves, or easily to be discerned by every learner's natural sense, reason, or common experience.

But yet in liberal sciences and professions of *In liberal learning, this is more apparent, where not only such sciences.* common and vulgar points are to be presumed, without proof or discourse ; but also certain propositions are to be granted in the beginning, as grounds whereupon to build all *Grounds to the rest that ensues. So the logician, for example, be granted in sciences.* will have you grant before he enters in dispute with you, that contradictory propositions cannot be together *In logic.* either false or true : and also, that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied of the same subject, in the same circumstances of existence, time, &c.

The moral philosopher will have you grant at *In moral the beginning, that there is both good and evil philosophy.* in men's actions ; and that the one is to be followed and the other avoided. The natural philosopher will have *In natural you confess, that all physical bodies, which depend philosophy.* of nature, have motion in themselves, and are subject to alterations : and whatsoever is moved is moved by another. The mathematician will have you grant, as an undeniable principle, that every whole is bigger than *In the mathematics.* any of its parts. As also the metaphysician, or supernatural philosopher, that nothing can be existent, *In metaphysic.* and not be existent at the same time. And so other such like principles and common grounds, in these and all other sciences, are to be demanded, granted, and agreed upon at the beginning, for the better pursuit and establishment of that which is to follow, being things in themselves, as you see, either by nature, common sense, or experience, most clear and manifest.

And is not this true, think you, also in divinity, *In divinity.* and in the affairs that we have now in hand ? Yes certainly, if we believe St. Paul, who writes thus to the Hebrews, *Heb. xi. Credere enim oportet accedentem ad Deum, quia, est et inquirantibus se remunerator sit :* he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that seek him. Behold here two principles, where- *Two principles in a man must be resolved, before he can seek or draw near unto God : the one, that there is a God ;* *principles in divinity.*

and the other, that the same God is just to reward, according to his deserts, every man that seeks him.

Which two principles or general grounds, are so evident indeed of their own natures, and ingrafted by God's own hand, into the mind and understanding of every particular man at his nativity, according to the saying of the prophet: *Psalms* iv. 'The light of thy countenance is sealed upon us, 'O Lord;' that were not the times we live, too wicked, and the shameless induration of sinners intolerable, we should not need to stand upon the proof of these points, for confirmation of the matter we now treat, which is of resolution: but rather, supposing and assuring ourselves, that no reasonable creature living could doubt of these principles, we should pursue only the consideration of other things, that might stir up our wills to the performance of our duties towards this God, that has created us, and will give us our reward at the end, to every one according to his works.

*The cause
of this
chapter.*

But as iniquity has so advanced herself at this day, in the hearts of many, as not only to condemn and offend their Maker, but also to deny him, thus to patronize their evil life, and to extinguish the worm of their own afflicted and most miserable consciences; I am forced, before all other things, to discover this absurd and gross error of theirs, and to remove also this refuge of desperate iniquity, by showing the invincible verity of these two principles, the one depending of the other, in such sort, that the first being proved, the second must of necessity follow. For if once it be manifest that there is a God, who has care and

*If there is a
God, he is
a just re-
warder.*

providence of all those, whom he has created and governs; then must it ensue by force of consequence, that he is also to reward the same men, according to their merits and the works they have done in this life.

First then to prove this principle, *there is a God*, I need use no other argument, or reason in the world, but only refer each man to his own sense,* in beholding the world, whereof every part and portion is a clear glass, representing God unto us; or rather a fair table, wherein God has drawn and imprinted himself, in so many just characters and legible letters, that the simplest may read, and understand the same.

In respect hereof, the wise man said so long ago, vain and foolish were all those, who considering the works, that

* See Lactantius at large, in his book of the workmanship of the world.

are seen in this world, could not thereby rise to understand the workman. And he gives this reason, *Sap. xiii. A magnitudine enim speciei et creaturæ, cognoscibiliter poterit creator horum videri.* For by the greatness of beauty in the creature, *may the creator thereof be seen and known.* Which St. Paul confirms when he says, *Rom. i.* ‘The invisible things of God ‘may be seen, and known by the visible creatures of this ‘world ;’ which is to be understood in this sense, that as a prisoner in a dungeon may easily, by a little beam that shines in at a chink, conceive there is a sun, from whence that beam descends : and as a traveller in the wilderness, that falls upon some channel or brook, may ascend by the same to the well or fountain : even so he, that beholds and considers the wonderful works of this world, may thereby conceive also the wonderful artificer or workman that made them.

If man should pass by sea into some foreign, *A similitude.* strange, and savage country, where nothing else but birds and beasts did appear ; yet if he should espy some exquisite building, or other work of art and reason, in the place, he would presently assure himself, that some men dwelt, or had been in that country ; for such things could not be done by beasts, or unreasonable creatures : even so in the view and consideration of this world.

If we cast our eyes upon the heavens, we remain astonished at the marvels we behold : but who made them ? We see the skies of exceeding huge bigness, distinguished with most admirable variety and beauty, adorned with stars and planets, innumerable, and these qualified so with their divers, and different and unequal motions, as if they neither moved nor went together ; yet do they never stop or hinder one the other, nor change their course out of order or reason. *Job xxviii. Quis enarrabit cælorum rationem, et concentum cæli quis dormire faciet ?* Who is able to declare the reason of the heavens, or who can make cease or sleep the uniform course of their motion, says God to Job ? as who would say, that because no man or mortal creature can do this, therefore we may imagine of what power and perfection their Maker is. Which king David had done when he pronounced, *Cæli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum ejus, annuntiat firmamentum.* The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament does preach the works of his hands unto us.

The earth teaches God. If we cast down our eyes from heaven to earth, we behold the same of an immense bigness, distinguished with hills and dales, woods and pasture, covered with all variety of grass, herbs, flowers, and leaves : moistened with rivers, as a body with veins ; inhabited by creatures of innumerable kinds and qualities ; enriched with inestimable and endless treasures : and yet itself standing, or hanging rather, with all its weight and poise, in the midst of the air, as a little ball without prop or pillar.

At which surprising and most wonderful miracle of nature, God himself, as it were, glorying, said unto Job, *Job xxxviii.* ‘ Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth ? tell me if thou hast understanding. Who set the measures thereof, if thou know ? or who stretched out the line upon it ? upon what are the foundations thereof grounded ? or who let down the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars praised me together, and all the sons of God made jubilation ?’

The sea shows God. If we look neither up nor down, but cast our countenance only aside ; we espy the sea on each hand of us, that environs round about the land. A vast creature, that contains more wonders, than man’s tongue can express. A bottomless gulf, that, without running over, receives all rivers, which perpetually flow. A restless fight and turmoil of waters, that never repose neither day or night ; a dreadful, raging, and furious element, that swells and roars, and threatens the land, as though it would devour it all at once. And though in situation it is higher than the earth, as the philosopher shows, and makes assault daily towards the same, with most terrible cries and waves mounted even to the sky : yet when it draws near to the land, and to its appointed borders, it stays upon the sudden, though nothing be there to stop it ; and is forced to recoil back again, murmuring, as it were, because it is not permitted to pass any further.

Of which restraint, God asks Job this question, *Job. xxxviii.* ‘ Who shut up the sea with doors, when it breaks forth, proceeding as it were out of a matrice ?’ whereunto no man being able to give answer, God answers himself in these words, ‘ I compassed it with my bounds, and put bars and doors : and I said, hitherto thou shalt come, and shalt not proceed farther, and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves.’

The things in man declare God. This in short, may be sufficient to prove the existence of a God, from these things we see without us : but if we should leave these and enter to seek God

within our own selves ; whether we consider our bodies, or our souls, or any one part thereof, we shall find so many strange things, or rather so many seas of miracles and wonders, that preach and show the glory of their Maker, that we shall not only perceive and see God most evidently, but rather, as a certain old heathen has written,* ‘ We shall feel and handle him in his works.’ Which kind of speech also St. Paul doubts not to use, affirming that God has given space to every man in this life to seek him, *Acts. xvii. Si forte attrahent eum, aut inveniant* ; if perhaps they may handle him, or find him out. Which manner of words doth signify, that by consideration of God’s creatures, and especially of the wonders in man himself, we may come to see and perceive the Creator so clearly, that, in a sort, we may be said to feel and handle him. So jointly do all things concur to the manifestation of their Maker ; so manifestly and effectually do they teach, and demonstrate, and point out God unto us ; nothing being so little, that declares not his greatness ; nothing so great, which acknowledges not his sovereignty ; nothing so low, which leads us not up to behold his majesty ; nothing so high, that descends not to teach us his verity.

It would be a labour without end, to go about in this place to allege, what might be said in the proof of this principle, *that there is a God* ; seeing there was never yet a learned man in the world, either Gentile or other, that acknowledged and confirmed not the same, being driven thereunto by the manifest evidence of the truth itself.

Old atheists If you object against me, Diagoras, Protagoras, Theodorus Cyrenensis, Bion, Boristhenes, Epicurus,† and some few others, that were open atheists, and denied God : I answer that some of these were utterly unlearned, and rather sensual beasts than reasonable men ; and consequently, might deny any thing, according to the saying of holy David. *Psalm xiii.* ‘ The fool said in his heart, there is no God.’ Others, that had some tincture of learning, rather jested at the falsehood of their own pagan idols, than denied the being of one true God.

But the most part of these men, indeed, and such others as in old times were accounted atheists, denied not God so much in words, as in life and facts : such as St. Paul ‡ called atheists in his days, that obeyed their bellies, and followed

* Arist. lib. de mirabilibus.

† Laertius 1. 2 and 4 de vit. philos.

‡ Rom. i. and Phil. iii.

their pleasures in sin and sensuality, not vouchsafing to think of God in this life ; such was Epicure, and in our days many others of his profession ; but yet as Lactantius* well notes, when the same men came to be sober, and speak of judgment, as at their death or other times of distress and misery, they were as ready to confess God as any other whosoever.

But for learned men, and people of discretion, sobriety, and judgment, there was never yet any, whether he was a Jew or a Gentile, that doubted of this verity ; but had means and arguments to confirm the same, as more particularly will be declared in the remainder of this chapter.

SECT. II.—*How the Heathens proved there was a God.*

Philosophers. AMONG the Gentiles or heathen people, those men were always most in credit, and in greatest esteem, that professed the love of wisdom ; and for that respect were called philosophers. Who being divided into divers sorts, and sects, had four principal sciences, whereof they made profession ; each one of these having other lower sciences comprehended under it.

Four principal sciences. The first of these four, is called natural philosophy ; the second moral ; the third, supernatural, or metaphysic : the fourth, mathematics ; and for the first three, they have each one their proper means, and peculiar proofs, whereby to convince that there is a God. The fourth, which is the mathematics, because it has no regard at all to the efficient or final cause of things, (under which two respects and considerations only God can be known, and manifest to men in this world) therefore this science has no proper means peculiar to itself, to prove this verity, as the other sciences have, but receives the same as borrowed from the former.

The natural philosopher. The natural philosopher, among the gentiles, had infinite arguments to prove by the creatures, that there was a God : but he reduced all to three principal and general heads, which are termed *ex Motu, ex Fine, et ex Causa efficiente* : that is, arguments drawn from the motion, from the end, and from the cause efficient of creatures that we behold ; which terms the examples following will make clear and manifest.

* Lactan. lib. 3. Institut.

The argument of *motion* stands upon this general ground in philosophy ; that whatsoever is moved is moved by another. Wherein also is observed, that in the motions of creatures, there is a subordination the one to the other. As for example*, these inferior bodies upon earth, are moved and turned by the air and other elements ; and the elements are moved by the influence and motion of the moon, sun, and other heavenly bodies ; these planets are moved by an impulse from the highest orb or sphere of all, that is called *the first moveable*, above which we can go no further among creatures.

The first argument in natural philosophy.

Primum mobile.

Now then the philosopher asks here, who moves this first moveable ? for if you say that it moves itself, it is against our former principle, that no thing is moved in nature, but by another. And if you say that some other thing moves it, then is the question again, who moves that other ? and so from one to another, until you come to something that moves, and is not moved by another ; and that must be God, who is above all nature.

This was a common argument of Plato† and Aristotle,‡ and of all the best philosophers. And they thought it a demonstration unavoidable, and it seems they were admonished of the argument by considering the motion of a clock, whose hammer, when it strikes, shows the next wheel whereby it is moved ; and that wheel shows another wheel ; and so from one to another, until you come to that which was the first cause of motion to all the wheels, and that is to the clock-maker himself.

An argument taken from the clock.

Aristotle,§ to king Alexander, uses this pretty similitude : that as in the choir of singers, when the foreman has given the first tone or note, there ensues presently a sweet harmony and consort of all other voices, both great and small, sharp and grave ; so God in the creation of this world, having given once the first motion to the highest heaven, called *Primum Mobile*, there ensue upon the same, all other motions of heavens, planets, elements, and other bodies, in most admirable order, concord and congruity, for conservation and government of the whole. And thus is God proved by the argument of motion.

A similitude.

The other two arguments, *of the end, and of the cause efficient of creatures*, are made evident in a certain man-

* Arist. 1. 7. and 8. Phys. † Plato 1. 10. de leigh. ‡ Arist. 1. 5. Phys. c. 5. § Arist. lib. de mundo.

The second argument of natural philosophy ner, by this that has been spoken of motion. For seeing by experience, that every thing brought forth in nature has a peculiar end appointed, whereto it is directed by the self-same nature (as we see the bird is directed to build her nest by nature, the fox to make his den, and so the like in all other creatures;) the philosopher asks here, what thing is that which directs nature herself, seeing each thing must have somewhat to direct it to its end? and no answer can be made, but that the director of nature must be something above nature; and that is God himself. This argument of the *final end*, is most excellently handled by Philo Judæus,* in his most learned treatise—of the workmanship of the world.

The third argument in natural philosophy. From the *cause efficient*, the philosopher disputes thus.† It is evident by all reason in respect of the corruptions, alterations, and perpetual motions of all creatures, that this world had a beginning; and all excellent philosophers that ever were have agreed thereupon, except Aristotle,‡ who, for a time inclined to maintain, that the world had no beginning, but was from all eternity; though at last,§ in his old age, he confessed the contrary, in his book to King Alexander.

This then being so, that this world had a beginning, it must needs follow also, that it had an efficient cause. Now then is the question, who is that efficient cause that made the world? if you say that it made itself, it is absurd: for how could it have power to make itself before it was, and before it had any being at all? if you say, that something within the world, that is some part of the world, made the whole, this is more absurd; for it is as if a man should say, that the finger, and this before it was a finger or part of the body, did make the whole body.

Wherefore we must confess by force of this argument, that a greater and more excellent thing, than is the whole world put together, or than any part thereof, made the world, and was the cause efficient of the frame that we see; and this can be nothing else but God, that is above the world. So that hereby we see, how many ways the natural philosopher is provided with arguments to prove there is a God, and that by reason only, without all light or assistance of faith.

* Philo de opificio mundi. † Vide Plutarch. de Placitis Philos.—

‡ Arist. 1. 8. Phys. and 1 de Gen. and Corrup. § Arist. 1. de mundo; and vide Plotin. 1. de mundo.

But the metaphysician or supernatural philosopher among the Gentiles, as he to whom it appertained more particularly, to handle these high and supernatural affairs, had many more arguments and demonstrations, to prove and convince the being of one God.

The metaphysician, and his arguments.

And first of all he said, that it could not stand with any possibility in his science, that *ens finitum*, a thing finite, or closed within bounds or limits, as this world, and every creature therein is, could be, but from some Maker or Creator. For, says he, the thing that in itself is not infinite, has its bounds and limits; and consequently there must be something that assigned these bounds and limits; and seeing in this world, there is no creature so great, which has not bounds and limits, we must of necessity imagine some infinite supreme Creator or Maker, that limited these creatures, even as we see that the potter at his pleasure, gives bounds and limits to the pot he frames.

The first argument in metaphysics.

Now then, says the metaphysician, we see by experience, that all the creatures and parts of this world, *are things by participation only*, because they are finite in nature, and have limitations in all their perfections, and may receive additions to the same; and consequently they must of necessity be referred to some higher cause, that is infinite in perfection, and exists of itself alone, without participation from others; and this is God, who being absolute, endless, and without all limitation of perfection in himself, communicates from his own incomprehensible infiniteness certain limited natures, and perfections to every creature, which perfections in creatures, are nothing else but little particles, and participations of the bottomless sea of perfections in the Creator, whereunto they are to be referred and reduced, as the beams to the sun, and brook to the fountain.

How all creatures are by participation of God.

The metaphysician uses a second argument, grounded upon certain rules of unity, whereof one principle is, that every multitude, or distinction of things, proceed from some unity, as from its fountain. This he shews by many examples of things in this world: for we see by experience, that the divers motions or moving of the lower spheres or celestial bodies, do proceed from the moving of one highest sphere, and are to be referred to the same as to their fountain. Many rivers

The second argument in metaphysic, de multitudine.

Primum mobile.

are reduced to one well or spring: innumerable beams to one sun: all the boughs of a tree to one stock.

Microcosm. In the body of Man, which for its beauty and variety, is called the *little world*: the veins, which are without number, have all one beginning in the liver; the arteries in the heart; the sinews in the brain; and that which is

The infinite things that proceed from the soul. more, the infinite actions of life, sense, and reason in man, as generations, corruptions, nourishments, digestions, and alterations, feeling, smelling, tasting, seeing, hearing, moving, speaking, thinking, remembering, discoursing, and ten hundred thousand

particular actions, operations and motions besides, which are exercised in man's body under these or other such names and appellations: all these, I say, being infinite in number, most admirable in order, and distinct in every one of their offices and operations, do receive notwithstanding, their beginning from one most simple unity, and indivisible substance, called the soul, which produces, governs, and directs them all to so innumerable, different, and contrary functions.

By this concludes the metaphysician, that, as among the creatures, we find this most excellent order and connection of things, whereby one brings forth many; and every multitude is referred to its unity, so much more, in all reason, must the whole frame of creatures contained in this world, wherein there are so many millions of multitudes with their unities, be referred to one most simple and abstract unity, that gave beginning to them all, and this is God.

The third argument in metaphysic. Subordination. A third argument used by the metaphysician, is derived from the subordination of creatures in this world; which subordination is such, and so wonderful, that we see, that no creature is by nature designed to serve itself alone, but also others, and all together conspire in serving the whole creation.

We see the heavens move about continually without ceasing; and this not to serve themselves but inferior creatures, less excellent than themselves. We see that water moistens the ground; the air cools, opens, and cherishes the same; the sun heats and quickens it; the moon and stars pour forth their influence; the winds refresh it; and all this not for themselves, but for others. The earth again, that receives their services, uses not the same for herself, or for her own commodity; but to bring forth grass wherewith to feed cattle; and they feed not for themselves, but to give nourishment unto man.

A similitude. Now then, says the metaphysician, if a man that stood afar off upon a mountain, should see in a field

under him, a great, huge, and main army of soldiers, most excellently well appointed, each one in order agreeing with the other ; divided into ranks, squadrons, companies and officers, subordinate the one to the other by degrees ; and yet all tending one way, all their faces bent upon one place, all moving, marching, and turning together, all endeavouring with alacrity towards the performance of one common service by mutual assistance, without dissention, discord, difference or clamour : he that should see this, says the metaphysician, as he could not but imagine some general high captain to be among these soldiers, whom all obeyed, and from whose supreme command and order, this most excellent subordination, agreement, and union proceeded ; so much more upon consideration of the former coherence, consent, and miraculous subordination of creatures among themselves in their operations, must we infer, that they have some general commander over them all, by whose supreme disposition each creature has its charge and peculiar task appointed, which he must perform for the common and universal service of the whole.

The fourth reason or argument alleged by the supernatural philosopher, is from the marvellous providence, art, and wisdom, discovered in the making of even the least creature within the world. For seeing there is nothing so little, nothing so base or contemptible, within the compass of this heaven that covers us, but if you consider it, you find both art, order, proportion, beauty, and excellency in the same : this cannot proceed from chance, as foolish Lucretius, and some others would have it ; for that chance is casualty without order, rule, or certainty ; and therefore it needs must come from the wisdom and providence of some omnipotent Creator.

The fourth argument in metaphysic. Providence.

Lucretius made divers books against the workmanship of the world.

If you take a fly, or a flea, or a leaf from a tree, or any other the least creature that is extant in the world, and consider the same attentively, you will find more miracles, than parts therein : you will find such proportion of members, such variety of colours such distinction of offices, such correspondence of instruments : and those so fit, so well framed, so coherent, so subordinate, that the more you contemplate, the more you will marvel. Neither is there any one thing in the world more effectual to draw a man to the love and admiration of his Creator, than to exercise himself often in these contemplations, for if his heart be not of stone, this will move his affection.

*Galen
forced to
confess
God's pro-
vidence.*

We read of Galen,* a prophane and very irreligious physician, that, as himself confesses in a certain place, taking upon him to consider the parts of man's body, and finding much wisdom in the order, use, and disposition of the same, he sought first to give the praise and glory thereof to nature, or to some other cause than to God. But in process of time, being oppressed as it were, with the exceeding great wisdom, proportion, and providence, which he discovered in every least parcel and particle of man's body, wherein nothing was redundant, nothing defective, nothing possible to be added, altered, or better devised: he broke forth into these words,† *Compono hic profecto canticum in creatoris nostri laudem, quod ultro res suas ornare voluit, melius quam in ulla arte possent.* Here truly do I make a song in praise of our Creator for that of his own accord, it has pleased him to adorn and beautify his things better than by any art possible it could be imagined.

Hereby then does the metaphysician gather and conclude most evidently that there is a God, a Creator, a most wise and powerful artificer, that made all things; such a one as exceeds all bounds of nature, and of human ability. For if all the world should join together, they could not make the least creature, which we see in this world. He concludes also, that the foresight and providence of this Creator, is infinite, for things to come in all eternity; and finally, that his wisdom and cogitations are inscrutable. And though sometimes he reveals to us some part thereof, yet often again we err therein. For which cause a wise heathen Platonick concludes thus after

A wonderful speech of a heathen. a long search about these affairs. ‡ 'I will praise God, says he, in search about these affairs, I will praise God in these things I understand, and I will admire him in those which I understand not: for 'I see that myself oftentimes do things, wherein my servants 'are blind, and conceive no reason: as also I have seen little 'children cast into the fire jewels of great price, and their 'fathers' writings of great learning and wisdom: for that they 'were not of capacity to understand the value and worthiness 'of the thing.'

I will allege one argument more of the metaphysician, grounded upon the immortality of man's soul; which immortality is proved with one consent of all learned men, as

* Galen 1. 5. de usu part. de prov.

† Lib. 3. de usu part.

‡ Plotia. lib.

Plato alleges;* for that is a spirit and immaterial substance, the nature of which depends not on the state of our mortal body; for so by experience we see daily, that in old men and withered sickly bodies, the mind and soul is frequently more quick, clear, pregnant, and lively, than it was in youth when the body was most lusty.

The fifth argument in metaphysics, Immortality of the soul.

The same is also proved by the unquenchable desire which our mind has of learning, knowledge, wisdom, and other such spiritual and immaterial things: wherein her thirst by nature is so great, that it cannot be satisfied in this life: neither can the objects of sense and bodily pleasures, or any other commodity, or delight of this material world, content or satiate the restless desire of this immaterial creature.

Which is an evident argument to the Philosopher, that some other object, and satisfaction is prepared for her in another world; and that of such excellency and supereminent perfection, that it will have it in all wisdom, all learning, all knowledge, all beauty, and all other causes of love, joy, and content, wherein our soul may rest for ever.

When the desire of the soul shall be satisfied.

This being so, says the Philosopher, it must ensue of necessity, that the soul and mind of man is immortal; that an immortal Creator sent the same into our bodies, and that to him again it must return, after the departure from this life here. This was the true meaning indeed (howsoever some late interpreters have misunderstood the same) of that ancient doctrine of old philosophers,† which Plutarch alleges out of Phythagoras and Plato, affirming, that all particular souls of men came, sent from one general and common soul of the whole world, as sparks from the fire, and beams from the common sun; and that after their separation from their bodies, they will return again to that general soul, called *anima mundi*, the soul of the world, for that it gives life and being to the world.

The meaning of old philosophers touching anima mundi.

This was the doctrine of old philosophers, which seems indeed to have been nothing else, though delivered in other words, than that which Solomon himself affirms in plainer speech, *Eccles. xii. Et spiritus redibit ad Deum, qui dedit illum*: And our soul or spirit shall return to that God that gave it unto us. And this may suffice for a taste of that which the metaphysician or supernatural philosopher can say for proof that there is a God

* Plat. l. 10. de repub. † Themist. in lib. anima. Plato de placit. philos.

The moral philosopher. There remains yet a third part of human wisdom or philosophy, called moral, whose reasons and arguments, for proof of this verity, I have of purpose referred to the last place ; because they are more plain and easy than the former, and more sensible to the capacity of every simple and unlearned reader.

The first argument of moral philosophy. For first of all, he observes that there is in the very natural inclination of man, be his manners otherwise ever so evil, a certain propensity and disposition to confess some God or Deity ; as he proves by the example of all nations, though they were ever so fierce or barbarous : yet they always confessed some God by nature, though no man did teach or instruct them therein. The same is confirmed by the common use of all heathens,

Tertullian handles this point excellently in his Apolog. in lifting up their eyes and hands to heaven, in any sudden distress that comes upon them : which imports, that nature herself has ingrafted this feeling, that there is a God : yea, further he alleges that by experience of all ages, it has been proved, that atheists themselves, that is, such men as in their health and prosperity, that they might with more liberty go on in a sinful life, would dispute against the being of any God : when they came to die or fall into great misery, they, of all other men, would show themselves most fearful of this God, as Seneca* declares, and as Suetonius,† shows in the example of Caligula : which is a token that their conscience forced them to believe a Godhead.

The saying of Zeno touching the death of Atheists. Nay, Zeno the philosopher, was wont to say : that it seemed to him a more substantial proof of this verity, to hear an atheist, at his dying day, preach God from a pair of gallows, or other such place of misery, when he asks God and nature forgiveness ; than to hear all the philosophers in the world dispute the point ; for at this instant of death and misery, it is like that such men speak in earnest and sobriety of spirit, who before, in their wantonness, impugned God, either out of vanity, ambition, sensuality, or dissimulation.

Now then, when the moral philosopher has proved by this natural inclination of man, that there is a God, who has imprinted in us such a feeling of himself, that no conscience can deny him, when it comes to speak sincerely : then steps he a degree further, and proves

The reason why there can be but one God.

* Seneca l. 1. de ira.

† Sueton. in Calig.

that this God, which is acknowledged, can be but one ; for if he is God, he must be infinite, and if he be infinite, he can have no companion : for two infinite things cannot stand together, without impeachment, the one of the other's infinity.

He proves the same by the custom of most Gentiles, who, as Lanctantius,* well notes in his time, when they swore, or cursed, or prayed. or wished any thing heartily, especially in affliction, that enlightens the understanding, their fashion was to say, God, and not the gods. And for *Deus, et non Dii.*

the more learned sort of them, howsoever they dissembled, and applied themselves outwardly to the error of the common people : yet, in earnest, they never speak of more than of one God ; as Plato† himself signifies to Dionysius, king of Sicily, in a certain letter, wherein he gave him a sign, when he speaks in earnest, and when in jest. *Hinc dices tu scribam ego serio, necne. Cum serio, ordior epistolam, ab uno Deo ; cum secus a pluribus.* By this sign shall you know whether I write in earnest or not, for when I write in earnest, I begin my letter with one God ; and when I write not in earnest, I begin my letter in the name of many Gods.

Julian the apostate, in his three most scornful books,‡ that he wrote against us Christians, whom contemptuously he called Galileans, endeavouring by all means to advance and set forth the honour of paganism, alleges this Plato for a chief pillar, and father thereof ; and dares prefer him before our Moses : and yet you see what he testifies of himself. And that this was his perpetual opinion, three of his worthiest scholars, I mean three of the most learned that ever professed the Platonic sect, Plotynus, Porphyrius and Proclus, all heathens themselves, do testify and prove in divers parts of their works, assuring that both they and their master Plato, never believed indeed but only one God. And as for Socrates, that was Plato's master, and pronounced by the oracle of Apollo, to be the wisest man of all Greece ; the world knows that he was put to death for jesting at the multitude of gods among the Gentiles.

Aristotle, that followed after Plato, began the scet of peripatetics, and was a man so much given to the search of nature, that in many things, he forgot the author of nature,

* Lact. 1. 2. divin. instit. cap. 2. † Plat. ep. 13. ad Dionys. ‡ Cyrilus lib. contra Julian, Plotinus Ennea. 1. 8. c. 1, 2, and c. 6. 1. 4. c. 1, 2, 3, 4. Porphy. 1. 2. de abast. and 1. de occa. c. 21. Proci. in theol. Platon. and 1. de anima et Dæm. 1. c. 31, 42, 53. Socrates, Apuleius, Angellius, and Laertius in vita Socratis.

Aristotle and the peripatetics. or at least, he treated little, and very doubtfully thereof; yet in his old age, when he came to write the book of the world to Alexander, (which book St. Justin,* the martyr, esteemed greatly, and called it the epitome of Aristotle's true philosophy,) he resolves the matter more clearly, saying thus of God:† 'He is the Father of gods and men; he is the Maker and Conserver of all things that are in the world.' And he adds further in the selfsame place, that the multitude of many gods was invented to express the power of this one God, by the multitude of his ministers: so that he makes all gods to be servants, besides only one. Which sentence of their master, Theophrastus and Aphrodisæus,‡ two principal peripatetics, do confirm at large.

Zeno and the Stoics. Zeno, the chief and father of all the stoics, was wont to say, as Aristotle reports, that 'Either one God, or no God:' which opinion is averred every where by Plutarch and Seneca,§ two most excellent writers, and great admirers of the stoic severity. And before them, by Epictetus,||, a man of singular account in that sect, whose words were esteemed oracles. *Dicendum, ante omnia, unum esse Deum, omnia regere, omnibus providere.* Before all things, says he, we must affirm, that there is one God; and that this God governs all, and has providence over all.

As for the academics, who made the fourth division or sect of philosophers, it is sufficient, which I have mentioned before, that Socrates their founder was put to death for his opinion in this matter; though it seems that such as followed in that sect, whose profession was to dispute, and doubt of every thing,** came at length, by their much jangling and disputing, to believe and hold nothing. Whereof Cicero himself may be an example, who in his books, *De Natura Deorum*, follows so far the academical vein of doubtful disputing to and fro about the nature of gods; that he may seem (and so did he†† to divers christians of the primitive church,) to be very irresolute, whether there were any God or no. Though in the end he makes show to conclude very plainly and peremptorily with the stoics.

* Justin in Apolog. † Arist. de mundo. ‡ Theo. in metaph. Alex. Aphrod. lib. de provid. § Plut. de sect. de tranquil. de quæst. Plat. Seneca de vita beat. de provid. in Ep. || Epict. apud Arianum. ** So in this time of variety of sects. †† Arnob. cont. Gentes.

All the four sects then of philosophers, who in their time bore the credit of learning and wisdom, made profession of one God, when they came to speak as they thought. But if we ascend up higher, to the days before these sects began, that is to Pythagoras and Archytas Tarentinus* ; and before them again, to Mercurius Trismegistus, that was the first parent of philosophy to the Ægyptians ; we shall find them so resolute and plain in this point, that no christian can be more. Whereof, he that desires to see innumerable examples, as well of these men's sayings, as of other learned heathens of all ages, let him read but St. Cyril's first book against Julian the apostate : or Lactantius's first and second books against the Gentiles, and he will remain satisfied.

All old philosophers acknowledged one God.

This then, is the moral philosopher's first argument : the inclination of all people to believe a Godhead : the instinct of nature to confess it ; the force of man's conscience to fear it ; the custom of all nations to adore it ; and finally, the consent and full agreement of all learned and wise men, in applying this Godhead, not to many, but to one only, that made this world, and governs the same. *Non hominibus, non dæmonibus, non dii ipsis, quos non naturæ ratione, sed honoris causa, Deos nominamus.*† We do not attribute the appellation of true God, says Trismegistus, either unto men or unto devils, or unto the multitude of other gods themselves : because we call them gods, not in respect of their natures, but for honour's sake. That is, we call them gods to honour them for their famous acts ; and not that we think them in nature true gods. Which Cicero confirms in these words : 'The life of man, and common custom has now received, to lift up to heaven, by fame and good-will, such men, as for their benefits are accounted excellent. And hence it comes, that Hercules, Castor, Pollux, Æsculapius, and Liber, are now become Gods, and heaven is almost filled with mankind.'

The recollection of the first argument in moral philosophers.

Cicero's opinion of the multitude of pagan gods, how they were made.

The second argument of moral philosophy is *de ultimo fine et summo bono*, that is concerning 'the last end of man, and of his highest or supreme felicity,' whereby the being of God is also confirmed. And though I have said somewhat of man's end before ; yet

The second argument of moral philosophy.

*Vide apud Plutarch. de placitis Philos. Trismeg. in Pœmand. et in Asclep. † Trismeg. Pœm. nd. c. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. in Asclep. c. 2, 6, &c.

what in this place I am to add, is more proper and peculiar to moral philosophy. For as other sciences may, and do consider the final ends of other creatures, which are divers, and yet all concur for the service of man : so the science of moral philosophy does properly consider the final end of man himself, calling it *summum bonum*, his greatest and highest happiness, whereunto he was created, and whereunto he tends in this life, and wherein he rests and reposes without further motion or appetite, when he has obtained it.

Every thing in this world has a natural desire of obtaining its end. For better understanding whereof it is to be considered, that every thing in this world has some particular end, together with an appetite and desire, ingrafted by nature, of attaining that end ; which desire ceases, when the end is obtained. As, for example, a stone has a natural appetite to go downward to the centre or middle of the earth, and so it rests in no place, except by violence it be stopped until it come thither. On the contrary, fire reposes no where, except it be restrained, until it mounts up above the air, to its peculiar and natural place of abode, where, of itself, it rests. And so in other things that are without sense, there is a certain natural appetite and desire, carrying them to their end ; which end being once obtained, that desire and appetite of itself reposes.

The felicity of beasts. In beasts likewise we behold, that they have a desire to fill their bellies, and to satisfy their own senses, which being satisfied, they remain contented, and desire nothing else, until the same appetite of sense wants its object again. Whereby we perceive, that sensuality, or contenting the senses, is the final end desired by beasts, and their very *summum bonum*, or supreme felicity.

But in man, although for the support of the body, there is this appetite also to satisfy his senses, according to the lower portion of his mind, that is called *sensitive*; yet according to the other higher part of his mind, which we call *reason*, or the reasonable part, which is the only part indeed peculiar to man, that distinguishes him from unreasonable beasts ; he has an appetite of some more high and excellent object, than is the contenting of these senses ; for by experience we see and feel, that oftentimes when the senses are all satisfied, yet is the mind not quiet ; which argues that sensuality or sensual delectation, is not our *summum bonum*, wherein our mind must rest and enjoy her felicity.

Hercupon have philosophers and wise men fallen to dispute in all ages, what should be the final felicity and *sum-*

sumum bonum of mankind? and Cicero says,* that this point is *cardo totius Philosophiæ*, the hinge whereupon all philosophy hangs. For this being once found out, clear it is, that all other things and actions are to be referred to the obtaining of this end and happiness. And therefore about this point, there has been marvellous contention and fight among philosophers, the Stoics refuting the Epicures, and the Peripatetics refuting again the Stoics; and the Platonics, who came nearest the truth, impugning and refuting both the one and the other: and this dissention went so far, the one part assigning one thing, and the other another, to be this felicity, or *sumum bonum*; that Marcus Varro, a most learned Roman, gathered two hundred and eighty-eight different opinions about this matter, as St. Augustine notes.†

The contention of philosophers about the felicity of man.

And finally, when all was said and examined, Plato found that nothing, which could be named or imagined in this life, could be the felicity, or *sumum bonum* of man; for it could not satisfy the desire of our mind; and therefore he pronounces this general sentence: It is impossible that men should find their felicity, or *sumum bonum* in this life, seek what way they will; but in the next life, without all doubt, it must be found. The reason of which sentence and determination was, that Plato was able to refute any thing that the other philosophers did, or could name to be our felicity and final end in this life, were it riches, honours, pleasures, moral virtues, or the like, which each sect did assign.

The sentence of Plato in Phædon. How nothing in this life can be our felicity.

As for example, he proved that riches could not be *sumum bonum*, or happiness, for that they are uncertain, inconstant, vain, variable, and things that bring with them more danger oftentimes, and trouble of mind, than poverty does. Honours he refuted, because, besides their vanity, they depend of the mouth and minds of other men, who are changeable and inconstant. Pleasures of the body and voluptuousness, for that they are common to us with beasts, and always have annexed their sting and discontent, when they are past. Moral virtues, by reason they consist in a certain perpetual fight and war with our passions, which never give us rest nor repose in this life. Finally, whithersoever we turn ourselves, and whatsoever we lay our hands upon in this life, to make it our felicity, or *sumum bonum*: it fails us, says Plato, nei-

* Cic. l. de finib. bonorum et malorum. † Aug. l. 19. de Civit. c. 1

ther does it give any durable content to our minds ; wherefore this felicity is to be sought and obtained in the life to come.

Thus far arrives moral philosophy by reason, to prove that man's felicity or final end cannot be in any thing in this life or world. It proves also by the same reason, as in part it has been touched before, that this felicity of our minds in the life to come, must be a spiritual and immaterial object : since our mind and soul is a spirit, it must be immortal, as our soul is immortal. But what ! does human philosophy go on any further ? or can Plato assign the particular point wherein it stands ? Hear his words, and confess, that not without reason he was called *divine*. In this it consists, says he, *ut conjungamur Deo, qui omnis beatitudinis fastigium, meta, finis.** That we be joined to God, who is the top, the goal, and the end of all blessedness. And can any Christian, think you, say more than this ? yet hearken what a scholar† of Plato says, for explication of his master's sentence. *Supremus hominis finis, supremum bonum, id est Deus.* The final end of man, whereunto he tends, is a supreme or sovereign good thing, and this is God himself. By which words we see that these heathens, by the end of man, could find out God ; which was the second argument propounded in moral philosophy.

A third argument uses the moral philosopher for proof of God, which shall be the last I will allege in this place ; deduced from consideration of good and evil ; vice and virtue ; and especially of the reward which by nature, reason and equity is due to the one, as also the punishment belonging to the other. For, says he, as in all other things, creatures, and actions of this world that pass from the Creator, we see proportion, order, justice, wisdom, and providence ; so much more must we assure ourselves, that the same is observed in the same Creator's actions and proceedings towards man, that is the chief and principal of all other his creatures.

Now then we see and behold, that all other creatures are directed to their ends by nature, and do receive comfort and content, as long as they hold that course : and loss, disease, and grief, as soon as they break or swerve from the same. Only man has reason given him, whereby to know and judge

* Plato in Phæd.

† Plotin. Enu. l. 1. l. 4. c.

of his end : as also free-will and election, whereby he may, either direct his way to the same by virtue, or run astray by following of wickedness. Whereupon it ensues, that in all equity and justice, there must remain reward for such as do well, and follow the right path assigned them to their end and felicity, which is done by a good life : and punishment for the others that abandon the same for pleasure and sensuality.

But we see in this world, says the philosopher, that most wicked men do receive least punishment ; and many there are, as princes, and high potentates, whose lives and actions, be they ever so vicious, yet are they above the correction of mortal men : and many poor men on the contrary, who for their virtue, patience, and honesty, receive nothing in this life, but envy, malice, contempt, reproach, despite and oppression.* Wherefore, says he, either there wants providence and equity in the government and disposition of these great affairs, which we see not to be wanting in things of lesser moment ; or else there must be a place of punishment and reward in the life to come, for the souls of such as pass from hence ; and a just and powerful judge to make recompense of these inequalities, and injustices, permitted in this world : which judge can be none but the Creator himself.

And so hitherto I have declared, how every particular science, among the Gentiles had particular means and ways to demonstrate God, by contemplating of his creatures, and by force of reason, which no man could deny. Now it remains to show, how the Jew, or faithful Israelite, before Christ's appearance, was able to confirm this verity to a heathen, which shall be the subject of the following section.

SECT. III.—*How the Jews were able to prove God.*

THE people of Israel, who for many years and ages were the peculiar people and partage of God ; as they dwelt environed with Gentiles of each side that impugned their religion and worship of one God ; and had many weaklings among themselves, that were often tempted to doubt of the same religion, by the example of so many nations and countries about them, that made profession of a contrary religion ; so had the divines and learned men of this people, divers forcible proofs and most reasonable arguments

*The people
of Israel
God's par-
tage.*

* See in this matter, Socrates in *Apologia*, 5. Plato in *Cratyl* and in *Gorgia*. and in *Phæd.* and in l. 10. de leg. Plut. de sera numinis vindicta. And others.

peculiar to themselves, besides the gift of faith or any other demonstration that has been alleged, to confirm their brethren in the belief of one God, and to convince all atheists or infidels in the world.

Divers things whereby Jews show God. And though these proofs which they use were many; as the creation of the world by one God; the deriving of the Hebrew religion from the beginning; the conversation of God with Abraham, of whom the Jews descended; the miraculous delivering of that nation from Egypt, the law received from God's own mouth by Moses; the strange entrance of Jews into the land of promise; the extinguishing of the Gentiles who before inhabited there; the erection of the Jewish monarchy, and protection thereof against all other nations; the miraculous deeds and sayings of prophets, and a thousand things and reasons besides, which confirm most evidently, that the Jews' God was the only true God. Yet because all these things and sayings, with an infidel, had no more credit than the writings of scriptures wherein they were recorded; hereby it came to pass, that all, which a Jew could say for the proof of God, more than a Gentile, depended only upon the authority of his scriptures supported by tradition. And for this cause he referred all his proofs and arguments to make evident the truth and certainty of the scriptures, which thing once performed, the being of one God cannot be called in controversy; for the scriptures are nothing else but a narration of the acts and gests of that only one God, whom the Jews acknowledged.

Comfortable to hear the certainty of Scriptures declared. We are now then to see, what the Jews were able to say for proof of his scriptures; and consequently, for demonstration of God; of his judgments declared therein. Which discourse, as it was profitable in old times, to encourage and confirm all such, as were or might be tempted with infidelity; so can it not be but very comfortable to us Christians of these days, to behold the certainty of these scriptures laid before us, upon which the foundation of our whole faith depends.

The first proof of Scriptures, Antiquity. First, therefore, the Jew, for proof of his Scriptures, alleges the great and wonderful antiquity thereof. For as God, says he, was before idols, and truth before falsehood; so was the scripture, which is the history of the true God, long before the writings of Pagans or Infidels.* Nay, further he shows, that the most part

* Josephus l. 10. cont. Appionem. handles this at large.

of things recounted in the Bible, were done before most of the Pagan gods were extant ; and that the very last writers of the Hebrew canon, which are Esdras, Aggæus, Zacharias, and Malachi, writ almost* six hundred years before the coming of Christ, when the second monarchy of Persians began, and consequently were before the most ancient heathen historiographers : to wit, before Hellanicus, Herodotus, Pherecides, Thucydides, and Xenophon.

And although the Gentiles had some poets before, as Orpheus, Homer, and Herodotus, and Lycurgus the law-maker, who lived a good while after these ; yet the eldest of these arrived no higher than the days of King Solomon ; which was five hundred years after Moses, the first writer of the bible. Long after whose time† the greatest part of heathen gods were unborn ; as Ceres, Vulcan, Mercury, Apollo, Æsculapius, Castor, Pollux, and Hercules, as the Gentiles themselves in their genealogies, do confess, and as for Abraham, that lived five hundred years before Moses, he was not only elder than the lesser gods which I have named ; but also than Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto, and such others ; who for dignity's sake and antiquity, are called by the Gentiles,‡ *Dii majorum Gentium*, the gods of the first class. And yet before Abraham, do the scriptures contain the history of two thousand years, or thereabouts.

So by this it is evident, that the writings of heathens, and the multitude of their gods, are but late fables, in respect of the old and venerable antiquity of Hebrew scripture ; and consequently the authority of the scriptures, must in reason be greater than of all other writings in the world beside ; seeing they were extant before all others, in those first times of simplicity and sincerity ; and were in part translated into divers languages, before the monarchy of the Persians, that is, before any histories of the Gentiles were written, as Eusebius§ declares, out of many heathen authors.

Next to the reason of antiquity, is alleged the manner of writing, authorising, and conserving these Scriptures, which is such as greatly confirms the certainty of things contained therein. For first, whatsoever is set down in these writings, was either taken immediately from the mouth of God, as were the prophecies and books of the law ; or else collected from time to time by general

*The proof
of Scrip-
tures.*

* Euseb. assigns them 570, in chron. † Euph. Messen. in Genealo. Deorum. ‡ Cic. de nat. Deorum. § Euseb. l. 9. de præp. Evang. cap. 2, 3, 4.

Their manner of writing and conserving. consent, according as matters and miracles fell out; as were the Book of Judges, the Books of Kings and Chronicles, and some others, that contain records and histories of times. Which books were not gathered by one private man, upon hearsay, or by his own imagination, long after things were passed, as heathen histories, and other profane records and monuments are; but they were written by general agreement, in the self-same days, when things were in sight and knowledge of all men, and so could not be feigned.

How scriptures were authorised. Secondly, when books were written, they were not admitted into the canon of authority of scriptures, that is, of God's word, or divine writings, but upon great deliberation, and most evident proof of their undoubted verity. For either the whole congregation or synagogue, who had the approving hereof, and among whom commonly were divers prophets, did know most certainly the things and miracles that were recorded in these writings, containing their history, to be true, as did also the whole people: or else they saw the same confirmed from God by signs and wonders: as it fell out in the books of their prophets, and of their law-giver Moses.

The care of conservation. Thirdly, when any thing was written and admitted for scripture, the care of conservation thereof was such, and the reverence of Jews thereunto so great, as easily to assure us, that no corruption or alteration could happen unto it. For first, the thing was copied out into twelve authentical copies, for all the twelve tribes; and then again in every tribe there were as many copies made as were particular synagogues within that tribe. All was done by special notaries, scribes, overseers, and witnesses. The copies, after diligent review taken, were laid up by the whole congregation in the treasure-house of the temple, under divers locks and keys, not to be touched but by men appointed; not to be used but with singular reverence. To add, diminish, corrupt, or alter, was present death by the laws of the nation. And how then was it possible, says the Jew, that among these writings, either falsehood should creep in, or truth, once received, could afterwards be corrupted?

It is impossible, says he, in reason; and therefore he observes another thing relating to this cause, which in truth is of very great moment: to wit, that no other nation under heaven, did ever so much esteem their own writings, as to offer themselves to die for

The esteem that Jews had of their Scriptures.

the same, whereas the Jews were ready to do it for every sentence and syllable of their scriptures. Whence also it did proceed, that in all their miseries and afflictions, wherein they were a spectacle to all the world, in their flights and banishments to Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Media, and other corners of the earth; in all their misfortunes, assaults, and devastations at home; yet they ever had special care to conserve these writings, more than their own lives; and so have kept the same without maim or corruption, more ages together, than all the nations in the world have done any other monuments.

The third persuasion which is used by the Jew for the verity of his scriptures, is, the consideration of the particular men that wrote them: who were such, as in reason cannot be suspected of deceit or falsehood. For, as I have said, the stories of the bible were written from time to time by public authority, and by the testimony of all men, that saw and knew the things that are rehearsed. The books of prophecies were indited by the prophets themselves, who were plain, simple, and sincere men, authorised from God, by continual miracles; and yet so scrupulous and timorous of their own speeches, that they durst say nothing, but only ‘our Lord says this; the God of hosts commands that,’ &c.

*The third
proof of
scriptures.*

*The sincerity of the
writers.*

And when they had preached, and read their writings in the hearing of all the people, they protested, that it was not man’s word, but God’s; and that for such they left it in the public treasury of their nation, until by tract of time, the event and fulfilling of their prophecies should prove them true, as it always did; and both their own lives and deaths declare that they meant no falsehood; their lives being such, as were not subject to the corruption, pride, vanity, or ambition of this life, as other prophane and heathen writers were; and their deaths, for the most part, offered up in holy martyrdom, for defence of that truth which they had preached and written; as appears in Isaiah,* that was sawed in pieces by king Manasses; in Jeremiah, that was stoned to death by the common people; in Ezekiel, that was slain by the captain of the Jews at Babylon; in Amos, whose brains were beaten out by Amasias the wicked and idolatrous priest in Bethel; in Micheas, whose neck was broken by prince Joram, son to king Achab; in Zachary, that was slain at the altar, and the like.

*The lives
and deaths
of the prophets.*

* Sec. Epiphan. de vitis Prophetarum.

*A peculiar
considera-
tion of Mo-
ses, first
writer in
the bible.*

And this for the prophets of latter times among the Jews. But now if we consider the first prophet of all that wrote among that people, I mean Moses, that was not only a prophet, but also an historiographer, a law-giver, a captain, and a priest; the first that ever reduced the people to a commonwealth, and the first that put their acts and gestic in writing, or rather the acts and gestic of Almighty God towards them; this man I say, if we consider him only, I mean the circumstance of his person, the Jew thinks this a sufficient motive to make any man of reason believe whatsoever he has written in the bible, without further confirmation.

And first, as to his antiquity, I have spoken before, and the heathens do confess it :* and as for the miracles done by him, the greatest enemies that ever he had in the world, that is, Ap-pion, in his fourth book against Jews, and Porphyrius in his fourth book against Christians, do acknowledge them : and Porphyrius adjoins more for proof thereof, that he found the same confirmed by the history of one Sanconiathon, a Gentile, who lived, as he says, at the same time with Moses. But what ? all those miracles, say they, were done by art magic, and not by the power of God, as Moses boasted.

But then the Jew asks them, where Moses, a shepherd, *Exod.* iii. iv. viii. could learn so much magic ? or why could not the magicians of Pharaoh, whose study was in that profession from their infancy, either do the like, or at least deliver themselves from the plagues of *Ægypt* ? why did they cry out, *the finger of God is here* ? where did you ever hear such works done by magic as Moses did, *Exod.* xvi. when he divided the red sea ? *Num.* xi. when he called into his camp so many quails upon the sudden, as sufficed to feed six hundred thousand men, besides women and children ; *Jos.* v. when he made a rock to yield forth a fountain ? *Psal.* lxxvii. when he caused a dew to fall from heaven that nourished his whole camp for forty years together ? *Num.* xvi. when he caused the ground to open, and swallow up alive three of the richest noblemen of all his army, together with their tabernacles, and all whatsoever belonged to them ? † when he caused a fire to come from heaven, and consume fifty gentlemen adherents to the former rebels, without hurting any one that stood about them ?

* Euseb. l. 9 and 10. de prep. Evan. Joseph. l. 1. cont. Appio. l. 1. and 2. Anti. † Joseph. l. 4. Antiq. c. 2 and 3.

These things did Moses and many others in the sight of all his army, that is, in the sight of many hundred thousand people, among whom there were divers his emulators, and sworn enemies, as by the history and scripture itself appears. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their faction, sought in all things to disgrace him, and to diminish his credit;* and therefore if any one point of these miracles had been reproveable, Moses would never have durst to put the same in writing; nor would the people have stood with him, and much less have received his writings for divine, and for God's own words, being solicited against him by so potent means: had they not known all things therein contained to be true, or had they not seen his strange miracles, and familiarity with God.

But he dealt plainly and simply in this behalf; he wrote the things of his own doings, which every man present did know to be true; and of God's speeches and communications to himself, he wrote *The plain and sincere proceeding of Moses.* as much as he was commanded, whereof both God and his conscience did bear him witness. He caused the whole to be read unto the people, and laid up in their secret ark and tabernacle, as God's own writing and covenant with that nation. He caused all the whole army to swear and vow the observance thereof. And drawing towards his death, he made a most excellent exhortation unto them, persuading them sincerely to the service of their God,† and confessing his own infirmities, and how for his offences he was to die before their entrance into the land of promise. He concealed not the offences of his brother Aaron, or of his grand-father Levi, or of his sister Mary, and others of his kindred, as worldly princes for their honour are wont to do;‡ neither did he go about to bring into the government after his decease, any one of his own sons, which is greatly to be observed;§ notwithstanding he left behind him such as were fit for that station, and himself of power to place them in it, if he had endeavoured; but he left the government to a stranger named Joshua, as God had commanded him.

All which things, says the Jew, do prove sufficiently, that Moses was no man of ambition, or of worldly spirit, but a true servant of God, and consequently that wrought not by magic or falsehood, but only by the power of his Lord and Master: and

* Num. xvi. Deut. i. i. Psalm xxii. 5. † Num. xx. and xxvii. Deut. xxxi. ‡ Exod. xxxii. Gen. xlix. Num. xii. Deut. xiv. § Num. i. Deut. iii. vii.

that his writings are true, and of the same authority, as in his life and death he affirmed them to be, to wit, the undoubted word of Almighty God.

The fourth proof of Scriptures. Consent. This he confirms yet further by a fourth reason, which is the consent and approbation of all latter writers of the bible, that ensued after Moses. For

as among prophane writers of worldly spirit, it is a common fashion for him, that follows, to reprehend the former, and to hunt after praise, by his ancestor's disgrace : so it is a most certain argument, all these writers of the bible, were guided by one spirit from God, that in continuance of so many ages, and thousand years, no one yet ever impugned the other, but always the latter supposing and approving the former for true, does build thereupon, as upon a sure foundation. So the writings of Joshua do confirm and approve the writings of Moses ; and the records of the Judges do reverence and allow the book of Joshua. The history of kings and Chronicles, does refer itself to the history of Judges. One prophet confirms another. And finally, Christ approves them all, by the known division of Law, Psalms, and Prophets ; which is a demonstration that all their spirits agreed in one.

Four considerations external. And thus hitherto have been declared these four considerations, that are external, that is, not taken from the word of the book itself, as to what it contains : to wit, the antiquity and continuance of the scriptures ; the manner of their being writ and preserved from corruption ; the sincerity, virtue, and simplicity of their writers, *Considerations internal.* together with their agreement and coherence in one spirit. But now further, says the learned Jew, if you will but open the book itself, and look into the text, and that which therein is contained, you will see God's own hand, God's own characters, God's own sign and seal, and subscription to the paper. You will see God's omnipotence, God's spirit, God's providence, no less in these letters of his book, than you beheld the same before, in the tables of his creatures : nay, much more, says he, for these letters were divided for declaration of these tables ; to the end such, who by the reason of their blindness could not see him in his creatures, might learn at last to read him in his scriptures.

The fifth proof of Scripture. Consider, then first, says he, the subject or argument which the scriptures do handle, together with the scope and end, whereto they do level. You will find, that the first is nothing else but the acts and gests of one eternal God, as before has been mentioned ; and the second

nothing else, but the only glory and exaltation of the same great God, together with the salvation of mankind. And can you find any writings in the world besides, that have so worthy an argument, or so high an end? read all the volumes and monuments of the pagans; turn over all their authors, of what kind, or name, or profession soever, and see what mention they make of these two things, I mean of the honour of God, and of the salvation of man? read their philosophers, and see whether they ever name or pretend these things; read their historiographers, and mark how many battles and victories they attribute unto God. They will describe to you often the particular commendation of every captain; they will defraud no one soldier of his praise in the victories; they will attribute much to the wisdom of the general; much to his courage; much to his watchfulness; much to fortune; they will attribute to the place, to the wind, to the weather, to the shining of the sun, to the raising of the dust in the enemies' eyes, to the flying of some little bird in the air, and a thousand such petty observations besides; but to God, nothing. Whereas on the contrary in the scriptures, it is in every battle recorded, 'God delivered them into their enemies' hands: God overthrew them: God gave the victory.'

Their argument and end.

Philosophers. Historiographers.

Again, consider the laws, and the law-makers among the Gentiles, as Lycurgus, Solon, Draco, Numa, and the like, and see whether you can find any one such law, or tending to such an end as this of the Jews: *Deut. vi.* 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul: and shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Consider in all the soothsayers and diviners among the Gentiles, whether they used to say in their predictions, as the prophets of Israel did: *Dominus dixit*: our Lord hath spoken it; or else: *Ego dico*: I do speak it. Compare their versifiers and poets with those of the scriptures, and see whether they have laboured in the praise of men, or of God. And whereas heathen poets have filled up their books, as also the most part of ours at this day, with matters of carnal love: mark whether any of them ever break forth into such pangs of spiritual chaste love as holy David did, when he said: *Psal. xvii.* 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength, our Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer, my God is my helper, and I will hope in him, my protector, and the horn of my salvation.' And again in ano-

Heathen lawmakers.

Prophets and soothsayers.

Versifiers and poets.

The vehement love of David.

ther verse : *Psal.* lxxii. ‘ For what is to me in heaven ? and ‘ besides thee, what would I upon the earth ? God of my ‘ heart, and God my portion for ever.’

Profane writings treat only of men. By all which it is evident, that as profane writings and writers, which do treat of men, extol men, seek the grace of men, refer all to the commodity and good liking of men, do proceed from the spirit of man ; and are subject to those infirmities of falsehood, error, and vanity, wherewith man is entangled in this life : so the scriptures, which handle matters above the compass of flesh and blood ; that refer all to God, and supernatural ends, could not proceed from nature or human spirit. For by nature the Jews were men, as the Gentiles were, and had their infirmities of flesh and blood as the others had. And therefore it must needs be concluded, these high and supernatural writings among them proceeded from God, that especially directed them, and gave them light of understanding above all other nations and people in the world.

The sixth proof of Scriptures. Their style. Next after the argument and end of the scriptures, the Jew would have us to consider the peculiar style and phrase which they use ;* for says he, it being different from all other manner of writing in the world, and unimitable to men, it does discover the finger of God, by which it was framed. For, whereas human writers do labour much in adorning their style, and reducing their words to number, weight, measure and sound, with addition of many figures, and other ornaments, to allure the reader ; the scripture takes quite another course, and uses a most marvellous simplicity, thereby to accommodate itself to the capacity of the weakest : yet always carrying with it so great profundity, that the most learned, in search thereof, must necessarily confess their own ignorance. For example sake ; consider but the first words of the bible : *Gen.* i. ‘ In the beginning God created heaven and earth ; and ‘ the earth was void and empty ; and darkness was upon the ‘ face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved over the waters ; and God said, be light made, and light was made,’ &c. What can be more plain and simple than this narration, to instruct the unlearned about the beginning and creation of the world ? and yet, when learned men come to examine every point thereof, how, and what, and where, and in what manner, and when things were done ; it astonishes them all to

* See St. Aug. of this at large, lib. 12. de civ. Dei.

consider the difficulties, which they find, and the darkness of so infinite and inscrutable mysteries.

Besides this, there is found with the same simplicity, a strange majesty and gravity of speech, declaring sufficiently from how great and potent a prince it proceeds. For as great monarchs in their edicts and proclamations, are wont to speak unto their subjects, not in figures and rhetorical phrases, but plainly, briefly, and peremptorily, to show their authority: so the scriptures, to declare whose edicts they are, use the like manner of phrase and style to all the world, without alluring or flattering any man, and without respect of monarch, emperor, prince or potentate. *Deut. iv. xvi. xxii. Fac hoc, et vives: do this and thou shalt live: si peccaveris in me, morieris in æternum: if thou sin against me, thou shalt die everlastingly.*

And although as I have said, the scriptures do use this simplicity of speech, and do not admit that kind of painting and artificial style, which human writers do so much covet: yet in persuading, instructing, moving of affections, and all other effects which speech or writing can work, there is no comparison, which is most wonderful, between any other writings in the world and these. Whereof I could allege many proofs and examples; but it would be too long. Let a nyman read attentively but the first chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, and compare it with any part or parcel of Tully's or Demosthenes' orations, and see whether the difference of words be as great, as the difference of notions? let divers hymns, and holy *Psalms* of the scriptures, be compared with the most pathetical poems that man's wit has invented, and see whether there be any comparison in stirring and firing of affections or no?

This I am sure, that Josephus* the Jew, who for glory of his eloquence, had his image of metal erected, by Titus the emperor, in the market place of Rome, wrote the same story which the scriptures contain; and bestowed much labour, and human cunning therein. But† yet, even in those places where he endeavoured most to show his art, *Gen. xxii.* as in the sacrifice of Isaac by his father; and in the meeting of Jephtha, *Judic. xi.* with his only daughter, whom by vow he was constrained to put to death, the scriptures are able to pierce the heart and wring out tears of the reader; whom Josephus will

* Flav. Josephus de Antiq. Judiac. † See St. Hierom. lib. de scrip. Eccl.

not greatly move with his rhetorical oration, though otherwise very learned and artificially penned.

Two miracles reported by Aristæus. Aristæus, that learned Gentile of whom we have made mention before, who was in special favour with Ptolomy the second, great monarch of Egypt, about three hundred years before Christ's nativity; and a chief undertaker in procuring the translation of the Hebrew bible into the Greek language, reported,* of his own knowledge, to the king two strange accidents which had happened in his time, and which he had understood of the parties themselves, to whom they had happened. The first was of Theopompus, an eloquent historiographer, who having translated certain things out of the bible; and endeavouring to adorn the same with vain colours of eloquence; could not perform his desire, but was struck with a sudden maze and giddiness in his head; and was warned in his sleep, not to proceed further in that work after that sort, for such manner of style was too base for such high matters, as the scriptures contained.

Theodactes. The other example was of Theodactes, a writer of tragedies, who told Aristæus, that once he attempted to bring a certain matter out of the Jewish bible, into a pagan tragedy, and that thereupon he was presently struck blind; whereupon he being astonished, and falling to repentance for what he had done, and desisting from the enterprise, as also Theopompus did: they were both of them restored again to their health. And thus much did three pagans confess of the authority, divinity, and peculiar sacred style of our scriptures.

The seventh proof of Scriptures. But now further it ensues in order, that after the style and phrases, we should consider a little the contents of the scriptures, which will, perhaps, more

The contents. clearly direct us to the view of their author, than any thing else that hitherto has been said. And for our

present purpose, I will note only two special things contained in the bible. The first shall be certain high and hidden

High doctrines. doctrines, which are above the reach and capacity of human reason, and consequently could never fall into man's brain to invent them. As for example; that all this wonderful frame of the world, was created of nothing, whereas philosophy says, that of nothing, nothing can be made: that angels being created spirits, were damned eternally for their sins: that Adam, by disobedience in paradise, drew all

* Aristæus libello de translat. Bibliorum et apud. Eus. l. de præp. evan. cap. 1. Theopom.

his posterity into the obligation of that his sin : and that the woman's seed should deliver us from the same : that God is one in substance, and three in persons : that the second of these persons being God, should become man, and die upon a cross for mankind : that after him, the way to all felicity and honour should be by contempt, suffering, and dishonour. These doctrines, I say, and many more contained in the bible, being things above man's capacity to devise, and nothing agreeing with human reason, must evidently declare, that God was the author and inditer of the scriptures ; for by him only, and from no other, these high and secret mysteries could be revealed.

The second thing contained in scriptures that could not proceed but from God alone, are certain prophecies or foretelling of things to come. Wherein God himself challenges the idols of the Gentiles, to make experience of their power in these words :

The prophecies in Scripture declare their author.

Isaiah xli. 23. ' Show the things that are to come hereafter ; ' and we shall know that ye are Gods.' Which is to be understood, if they could foretel particularly and plainly what was to come in things merely contingent, or depending of man's will, they should thereby declare their power to be divine.

For although the idols of Gentiles, as Apollo and others that gave forth oracles (which were nothing else indeed, but certain wicked spirits, that took upon them these names) did sometimes happen upon the truth, and foretel things to come ; as also some astrologers, sooth-sayers, and magicians do, either by knowing the motions of the stars, and other elements, or by the assistance of these wicked spirits and devils ; yet are the things which they prognosticate, either natural and not contingent ; and so may be foreseen and foretold in their causes ; as in rain, heat, cold, winds, and the like ; or else if they were accidental, these predictions of theirs were only conjectures, and also, most uncertain and subject to errors.

How the devils and other creatures may foretel things.

This Porphyrius, the great patron of paganism, testifies in a special book of the answers of his gods, wherein he swears, that he has gathered truly without addition or detraction, the oracles that were most famous before his time, with the false and uncertain event thereof ; in consideration of which event, he sets down his judgment upon their power in predictions after this manner.* ' The gods do foretel some natural

The opinion of a heathen touching the prophecies of his gods.

* Porphyr. l. de resp. et orac.

‘ things to come, for they do observe the order and conjunction of their natural causes. But of things that are contingent, or do depend of man’s will, they have but conjectures only in that by their subtilty and celerity they prevent us. But yet they oftentimes do lie, and deceive us in both kinds ; for as natural things are variable, so man’s will is much more mutable.’

Thus far Porphyrius of the prophecies of his gods, whereunto agrees another heathen of great credit among the Grecians, named Oenomaus,* who, for having been much delighted with oracles, and more deceived, wrote a special book in the end of their falsehood and lies ; and yet shows that in many things wherein they deceived, it was not easy to convince them of open falsehood ; for they would involve their answers purposely with such obscurities, generalities, equivocations, and doubtfulness ; that they would always leave themselves a corner wherein to save their credit, when the event should prove false. As for example, when Cræsus, that famous and rich monarch of Lydia, consulted with Apollo whether he should make war against the Persians, and thereby obtain their empire, or no. Apollo, desirous of bloodshed, as all wicked spirits are, gave his oracle in these words for to deceive Cræsus : † ‘ If Cræsus without fear, shall pass over Halys,’ (this was a river that lay between him and Persia) ‘ he shall bring to confusion a great rich kingdom.’ Upon which words, Cræsus passed over his army in hopes of conquering Persia ; but soon after he lost Lydia, by misunderstanding this doubtful prophecy.

This then is the imbecility of both human and angelical power, in prognosticating things to come, which are mere contingents. In which kind, notwithstanding, seeing that the scriptures have many and almost infinite prophecies, foretold many years, and sometimes ages, before they came to pass, set down in plain particular and resolute speech, at such times as there was neither cause to conjecture them, nor probability that ever they would be true ; delivered by simple and unlearned persons, that could foresee nothing by skill or art, and yet, that all these, by their events, have proved most true, and never any one thing in the same has failed : this, I say alone, does convince most apparently (all proofs and reasons, and other arguments laid aside,) that these scriptures are of God,

* Oenomaus falsitate oraculorum et de artificibus malefi.
l. 5 de præp. evang. c. 10.

† Euseb.

and of his eternal and infallible spirit. And therefore of these prophecies I will allege, in this place, some few examples.

Abraham, the first father and special patriarch of the Jews, had many prophecies and predictions made to him; as, of his issue, when he had yet none—nor ever like to have; of his inheriting the land of Canaan, and the like. But this which follows is wonderful, of his posterity's descent into Egypt; of their time of servitude, and manner of deliverance thence; the same being foretold more than four hundred years before it was fulfilled; and at that time when no likelihood thereof in the world appeared. The words are these, *Gen. ch. 12. 13. 15. 17. 28.* 'Know thou before hand that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not their own, and they shall bring them under bondage, and afflict them four hundred years: but I will judge the nation which they shall serve: and after this they shall come out with great substance.' This is the prophecy, and how exactly it was afterwards fulfilled by the ruin of the Egyptians, and deliverance of the Israelites, even at the time which is here appointed, not only the book of *Exodus* does declare, where the whole story is laid down at large; but* also the consent of† heathen writers, as has before been touched. And it is especially to be noted, that this prophecy was so common and well known among the Jews, from Abraham's time, down unto Moses, and so delivered by tradition from fathers to their children; that it was the only comfort and hope, not only of all the people in their servitude of Egypt, but also of Moses and others, that governed the people afterwards for forty years together in the desert; and was the only way to pacify them in their distresses and miseries: and therefore Moses, in every exhortation almost, makes mention of this promise and prophecy, as of a thing well known unto them all, and not devised or invented by himself, or any other.

Long after this, Jacob, that was Abraham's grandson, being in Egypt, and making testament, said of his fourth son Judah, *Gen. 49.* 'Juda, thee shall thy brethren praise—the sons of thy father shall bow down to thee. The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come, that is to be sent; and he shall be the expectation of na-

I. The prophecy to Abraham for his posterity.

II. The prophecy for the government of Juda.

* *Exod. 12. al. 3.* † *Porphyr. 4. contra Christ. Appion l. 5. cont. Judæos. † Joseph. de antiq. l. 11.*

tions.* Which latter part of the prophecy, all Hebrews do expound, that it was meant of the coming of the Messias, which was fulfilled almost two thousand years after at the coming of Christ, as shall be showed in another special chapter ; for at that time king Herod, a stranger, put the line of Juda, quite out from the government of Jewry. But for the first part, touching Juda's sceptre, it is wonderful to consider the circumstances of this prophecy.

For first, when it was spoken and uttered by Jacob, there was no probability of any sceptre at all to be among the Jews ; for the Isrealites, or sons of Jacob, at that day, were poor and few in number, and never like to be a distinct nation of themselves ; or to depart forth of Egypt again. And secondly, if any such thing should come to pass, if they should ever come to be a people, and have a sceptre or government of their own, yet it was not likely that Juda, and his posterity,

Unlikely- ty, should possess the same ; for he had three elder
ness of this brothers, to wit, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi ; who
prophecy. in all likelihood were to go before him. And thirdly, when Moses recorded and put in writing this prophecy, which was divers hundred years after Jacob had spoken it, it was much less likely it should ever be true ; for Moses then present in government, was of the tribe of Levi, *Exod.* 2. and Joshua, designed by God for his successor, was of the tribe of Ephraim, and not of Judah, *Jos.* 19. which makes greatly for the certainty of this record : for it is most apparent Moses would never have put such a prophecy in writing, to the disgrace of his own tribe, and to the prejudice and offence of Reuben, Simeon, Ephraim, and other tribes ; neither would they ever have suffered such a derogation, but that it was evident to them by tradition, their grandsire Jacob had spoken it : although then, there was no great likelihood it ever after should come to be fulfilled.

And this was for the time of Moses. But yet consider further, that from Moses to Samuel, who was last of all the Judges there passed four hundred years more, *1 Reg.* 1 and 8, and yet was there no appearance of fulfilling this prophecy to Israel ; for the tribe of Juda was not established in government. At length they came to have kings to rule ; and then was there chosen one Saul to that place, not of the tribe of Juda, but of Benjamin, and he indued with divers children to succeed him. And who could then *Saul*.

* Joseph. de antiq. l. 14.

have thought this prophecy could have been fulfilled? and yet as it was God's word it must needs take place; and therefore when no man thought thereof, there was a poor* shepherd chosen out of the tribe of Juda to be King, 1 Reg. xvi. and the government and sceptre so established in his posterity, that notwithstanding many of his descendants offended God more grievously, than ever Saul did, who was put out before, and though ten tribes, 3 Reg. xii. 2. Para. x. at once, broke from Juda, and never returned to obedience again, but conspired with the Gentiles, and other enemies of every side, to extinguish the said kingdom and government of Juda: yet for the fulfilling of the prophecy, the government of Juda held out still for more than† a thousand and two hundred years together, until Herod's time, as I have said: which is more than any one family in the world beside can show for his nobility, or continuance in government.

* David.

The wonderful providence of God towards the house of Juda.

The same Jacob, when he came to bless his little nephews, Manasses and Ephraim, that were Joseph's children, though himself was now dim of sight and could not well discern them; yet did he put his right hand upon the head of the younger, and his left hand upon the elder, and that of purpose, as it proved, afterwards; for when Joseph their father misliked the placing of their grand-father's hands, and would have removed the right hand from Ephraim, and would have placed it upon the head of Manasses, that was elder, Jacob would not suffer him, but answered, Gen. xlviii. I know that Manasses is the elder, and he shall be multiplied into many people, but yet his younger brother shall be greater than he. Which afterwards was fulfilled;‡ for Ephraim was always the greater and stronger tribe, and in fine became the head of the kingdom of Israel, or of the ten tribes, whereof there was no suspicion or likelihood when Jacob spoke this, or when Moses recorded it. And how then came Jacob to foresee this, so many hundred years before? as also to foresee and foretel the particular places of his children's habitations in the land of Promise: as of Zabulon, at the seaside; of Asser, in the fertile pastures; and of other the like, that fell out by casting lots, after four hundred years and more; whence had he this, I say to foretel what lots so long after should appoint, but only from God who governed their lots?‡

III. The prophecy for the greatness of Ephraim above Manasses.

* Euseb. in Chron. † Jos. xvi. and xvii. ‡ Eccles. xlviii. Isa. vii. and

IV. *The foresight of Moses.*

The like might be asked concerning Moses, who before his death in the desert, divided out the land of Canaan to every tribe, even as though he had been in possession thereof,* and as afterwards it fell out by casting of lots, as in the books of Joshua it does appear.† And could any human wit or science, think you, foresee what each tribe should attain, after his death, by drawing of lots? Again the same Moses foresaw, and foretold‡ in public hearing of all people how, in times to come, long after his death the Jews should forsake God, and for their sins be cast into many banishments, and finally be forsaken, and the Gentiles received in their room, as indeed it came to pass. And whence judge you, could he learn this, but from God alone.

In the book of Joshua, there is a curse laid upon the place where Jericho stood, and upon whatsoever person should go about to rebuild the same: to wit *Josh. vi.* ‘That in his eldest son, he should lay the foundations; and in his youngest son, should he build the gates thereof;’ which is to say, that before the foundations were laid and the gates built, he should be punished with the death of all his children. Which thing was fulfilled, almost five hundred years after, in one Hiel, who presumed, under wicked king Achab, *3 Reg. xvi.* to rebuild Jericho again, and was terrified from the same by the sudden death of Abiram and Segub, his children, as the book of Kings reports, according to the word of our Lord, which he had spoken in the hand of Joshua, the son of Nun: and since that time to this, no man, either Jew or Gentile, has taken upon him to raise again the said city, although the situation be most pleasant, as by relation of histories, and geographers appears.

VI. *The prophecy for the birth and acts of Josias.*

In the third book of Kings is recorded, that *3 Reg. xii.* when Jeroboam had withdrawn ten tribes from the obedience of Rehoboam, king of Juda; to the end they might never have occasion to reunite themselves again to Juda, by their going to sacrifice in Jerusalem, as by the law they were appointed; he built for them a goodly sumptuous high altar in Bethel, and there commanded them to do their devotions. And when he was one day there present himself, and offering the incense upon

xxv.ii. Jerem. xxxi. Eze i. xxxvii. Oze v. Gen. xlix. Jos. xiv. Exod xii. Gal. iii. Acts xiii. * Num. xxxiv. xxxv. xxxvi. † Jos. xv. xvi. xvii. ‡ Deut. xxii. 21.

the said altar, and all the people looking on, there came a man of God, says the scripture, and stood before the altar, and cried out aloud, and spoke these words : 3 Reg. xiii. ‘ O altar, altar ! thus saith the Lord : behold a child shall be born to the ‘ house of David, Josias by name, and he shall immolate upon ‘ thee the priests of the high places, who now burn incense ‘ upon thee ; and he shall burn men’s bones upon thee.’

Thus spoke that man of God in the presence and hearing of all the people, more than three hundred years before Josias was born ; and it was registered presently, according to the manner of that time, as I have noted before : and with the same were registered also the miracles, which happened about that fact ; as that the altar cleft in two upon the man’s words ; and Jeroboam, extending forth his hand to apprehend him, lost presently the use and feeling thereof, until it was restored again by the holy man’s prayers ; who notwithstanding, for that he disobeyed God’s commandment in his return, and eat with the prophet of Samaria, which was *Disobedi-* forbidden him, was slain in his way homeward by a *dience pun-* lion, and his body was brought back again and *ished griev-* buried in Bethel, nigh the said altar, among the *ously in* sepulchres of those idolatrous priests of that place, *God’s* but yet with a superscription upon his tomb, containing the *dearest.* name, and what happened.

There passed three hundred years, and, 4 Reg. xxiii. Josias was born, and came to reign in Juda ; and one day coming to Bethel to overthrow the altar, to destroy the sepulchres of those idolatrous priests that had been buried in that place ; when he began to break their tombs, he found, by chance, the sepulchre of the said man of God, with the superscription upon it. By which superscription, and by relation of the citizens of Bethel, when he perceived it was the sepulchre of him that had foretold his birth, his name and his doings, so many years before he was born, he let the same stand untouched, as the Fourth Book of Kings, chap. xxiii. does declare.

Now consider, whether among any people in the world, but only among the Jews, there were ever any such prophecy so certain, so particular, so long foretold before the time, and so exactly fulfilled ? but yet the Holy Scriptures are full of the like, and time permits me only to touch some few of the principal.

Isaiah the Prophet is wonderful in foretelling the mysteries and acts of the Messias ; his nativity, his life, and all the

particulars that happened in his passion. Insomuch, that St. Jerome says,* he may seem rather to write a history of deeds

VII. *The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and Babylon.* past, than a prophecy of events to come. But yet among other things, it is to be noted, that living in a peaceable and prosperous time, in Juda, when the Jews were in amity and great security with the Babylonians, he foresaw and foretold the destruction of Jerusalem by the said Babylonians, and the

grievous captivity of Jews under them; as also the destruction of Babylon again, 4 *Reg.* xx. 16. by Cyrus, King of Persia, whose express name and greatness he published in writing, almost two hundred years before he was born, saying in the person of God, first, to Hezekiah, king of Juda, that rejoiced in the friendship he had with Babylon: 4 *Reg.* xx. ‘behold the days shall come, that all that is in thy house, ‘and that thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall ‘be carried into Babylon, nothing shall be left, saith the ‘Lord. And of thy sons also that shall issue from thee, ‘whom thou shalt beget, they shall take away—and they ‘shall be eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon.’ And next to Babylon he said: *Isaiah* xiii. ‘The burden of ‘Babylon, which Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw, &c. Howl ye, ‘for the day of the Lord is near,’ &c. And thirdly, to Cyrus, not yet born, who was pre-ordained to destroy the same, and to restore the people from banishment, and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, he says thus, *Isaiah* xlv. ‘Who says ‘to Cyrus: thou art my shepherd, and thou shalt perform all ‘my pleasure, who say to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and ‘to the temple, thy foundations shall be laid.’ And in the next chapter: *Isaiah* xlv. ‘Thus saith the Lord, to my anointed Cyrus—I will go before thee, and will humble
VIII. *The wonderful prophecy of Cyrus, king of Persia.* ‘the great ones of the earth: I will break in pieces ‘the gates of brass, and will burst the bars of iron, ‘for sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my elect, ‘I have even called thee by they name, I have ‘made a likeness of thee, and thou hast not known me.’†

Can any thing be more clear or miraculously spoken in the world, than to name a heathen not yet born that should conquer so strong a monarchy as Babylon was at this time, and should build again the temple of Jerusalem, which others of his own religion had destroyed before him? what cause, what reason, what likelihood could be of this? yet Isaiah speaks it

* Hieron. in Prolog. Gal. † This he says for that Cyrus was an Infidel.

so confidently, as to say, *Isa. 13. That he saw it*: and he names two witnesses thereof, that is Urias, and Zacharias, that were not born many years after, saying: *Isaiah viii. 2* ‘And I took unto me two faithful witnesses, Urias the Priest, ‘and Zacharias the son of Barachias:’ whereof the first, *Jer. xxvi. 20.* was a prophet in Jeremiah’s time, a hundred years after Isaiah: and the second, *Zac. i. 1.*, lived four score years after that again, in the days of Darius, as by the beginning of his prophecy appears: and yet both, as you see, were distinctly named by Isaiah, so long before.

And whereas this book of Isaiah was pronounced only to the people, as other prophecies also were, and published into many thousand hands before the captivity of Babylon fell out; and then carried also with the people, and dispersed in Chaldea, and other parts of the world: there can be no possible suspicion of forgery in this matter; for all the world both saw it, and read it, many years before the thing came to pass; yet, when there was no thought of such possibility.

The same captivity and destruction of Jerusalem, by the Babylonians, was prophesied by Jeremiah a hundred years after Isaiah, and a little before the matter came to pass. Yea, while the Babylonians were about the walls of Jerusalem, and besieged the same for two years together, Jeremiah was within, and told every man, that it was in vain to defend the city; for God had now delivered it. And although he was counted a traitor for so speaking; especially when by an army of Egypt that came to the aid of Jerusalem from Pharaoh, the siege of the Babylonians was raised for a certain time; yet Jeremiah continued still his asseveration, and said to Zedekiah the king, *Jer. 37.* ‘Thou shalt be delivered into the ‘hands of the king of Babylon.’ And to the people, *Jer. 38.* *Hæc dicit, dominus, tradendo, tradetur hæc civitas, &c.* This saith our Lord, this city most certainly shall be delivered into the hands of the Babylonians. And so he continued, notwithstanding he was put in prison, and whipt, and threatened daily to be hanged, *Jer. 39.* until indeed the city was taken, *4 Reg. 24* and *25.* and Zedekiah’s eyes pulled out, his children slain before his face, and all other things performed which Jeremiah had prophesied and foretold them before.

And which is yet more marvellous, Jeremiah did not only foretel the particulars of this captivity; but also the determinate time how long it should last, saying, *Jer. 25,* ‘And all this

Circumstances of certain truth.

IX. The prophecies and doings of Jeremiah in the siege of Jerusalem.

The years foretold of the captivity of Babylon.

‘land shall be a desolation and an astonishment; and all these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years; and when the seventy years shall be expired, I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord—And I will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words that I have spoken against it—Whatsoever Jeremiah has prophesied,’ &c. In which prophecy is contained first,* the particular time, how long this captivity should endure. Secondly, the destruction of Babylon, and of that monarchy by the Persians; and thirdly, the returning home of the Jews again; which three things to have been after fulfilled, not only Esdras,† that lived at that time, and was an actor in performance of the last, but all other heathen writers besides, do record and testify.

And this prophecy of Jeremiah was so famous, and certainly believed among all the Jews, in the time of their captivity, that when the day of expiration drew near, Daniel writes thus of himself: *Dan. xi. i.* ‘In the first year of Darius—I Daniel, understood in books, the number of the years, whereof the word of our Lord was made to Jeremiah the prophet, that seventy years should be accomplished of the desolation of Jerusalem, and I set my face to our Lord my God, to pray and beseech in fastings, sackcloth and ashes,’ &c. Not only the Jews understood and believed this prophecy; but even Cyrus himself, that was a Gentile, gave full credit thereunto, and thereby was induced to restore the Jews, as appears both by his own word and proclamation, set down by Esdras, *1 Esd. 3.* that executed the same; and by his deeds also, *3. Esd.* in restoring home the Jews, and rebuilding their temple at his own great charges, as all historiographers of the heathens do confess.

The prophecies of Daniel.

I might here allege, infinite other examples, and make no end, if I would follow the multitude of prophecies which are dispersed throughout the whole scripture. I might show how Daniel, *Dan. v.* foretold to Baltazar, king of Babylon, in the midst of his triumph, and in the hearing of all his peers, the destruction which ensued upon him the very same night after.

I might allege how the same Daniel, *Dan. xi.* in the first year of Darius the Median, in the beginning of that second monarchy of Medians and Persians foretold how many kings

* Jer. 24, 25, &c. 29. v. 10.

† 1 Esd. 1. and 2. 3. Esd. 2.

should reign after in Persia, and how the last who was the fourth after him, and his name also Darius, should fight against the Grecians and be overcome by a Grecian king, which was Alexander; and how that kingdom also of Greece should be divided and torn in pieces after Alexander's death, and not pass to his posterity, as Justin,* and other heathen writers do testify it was, by Antigonus, Perdiccas, Seleucus, Antiochus, Ptolomeus, and other captains of Alexander, that divided the same among themselves, above a hundred years after Daniel was dead.

I might declare how the same Daniel foresaw, *The four monarchies of Assyrians, Persians and Romans.* *Dan. ii.* and foretold the four great monarchies of the world, and described the same as distinctly as if he had lived in them all, and as by experience we find since to be true. I might allege the particular description of the fight between Darius and Alexander, set down by Daniel, *Dan. viii.* under the names of the great ram, and the fierce goat with one horn, which goat he himself interprets to be meant of a Grecian king, that should conquer the Persians. And therefore Alexander, *The foretelling of Alexander the Great.* as Josephus† reports coming to Jerusalem about a hundred years after, and reading this prophecy of Daniel, interpreted unto him by Jaddus the high-priest, assured himself that he was the man therein signified; and so after sacrifice done to the God of Israel, of whom he affirmed, that he had appeared unto him in Macedonia, and had exhorted him to take this war in hand, and after he had bestowed much honour and many benefits upon the high-priest and inhabitants of Jerusalem, he went forward in his war against Darius with great alacrity, and had that famous victory, which all the world knows.

A hundred such prophecies more, which are as plain, as evident, and as distinct as this, I might allege of Elias, Elisha, Samuel, David, Ezekiel, the twelve lesser prophets, and others whom I have not named. And indeed the whole scripture is nothing else, but a divine kind of body, replenished throughout with the vital spirit of prophecy, and every day some prophecy or other is fulfilled, though we mark it not, and shall be to the world's end.

And the miracle of this matter is yet more increased, if we consider what manner of people they were for the most part, by whom these prophecies of hidden things were utter-

* Justin. hist. l. 12 and 13.

† Joseph. l. 1 de Antq. Judaic. c. 8.

What manner of persons our prophets were. ed : to wit, not such men as could gather their foresight of things by astronomy or astrology, that is, by contemplation of the stars, as some fond Gentiles did pretend (though Ptolomy* denies that such things can be foretold, but only by inspiration from God, in which all learned men do now agree); neither were they so sharp-witted, as to attain to prophesy by strong imagination, as most vainly Averroes† and his followers hold that some men may; nor finally, were they so delicately fed, as by exact diet and rules of alchymy, to come to prophecy, as alchymists dream that a man may do, and that Apollonius Thyanæus did; who by stellified meats, as they speak, came to be stellified himself; and so by the help of his glass called *alchymusi*, could foretel some matters and affairs to come.‡ Our prophets, I say, knew none of those fantastical devices, being for the most part, poor, simple, and unlearned men, as in particular is recorded, that David was a shepherd, and Amos, *Amos* i. was a keeper of oxen; yea, oftentimes they were women, as Mary, the sister of Aaron, called in the scripture, *Exod* xv. by the name of prophetess; *Judic* v. Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth; *1 Reg* ii. Anna, the mother of Samuel; *Luke* i. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist; *Luke* ii. Anna, the daughter of Phanuel; finally, the most holy and blessed Virgin Mary, *Acts* xxi. with the daughters of Philip and many such others, both in the Old and New Testament, who prophesied strangely, nor could possibly receive such foreknowledge of things to come, but only from the spirit of God, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is a manifest demonstration of the excellency of holy writ, and of the certainty of the things contained therein.

The eighth proof of scriptures, Appropriation of heathen writers. And now, although this might seem sufficient in the judgment and conscience of every reasonable man, as the Jew supposes, to prove that the scriptures are only from God; and consequently by them that there is a God; yet has he one reason more to confirm their sincerity, which I will allege in this place; and therewith make an end. His reason is, that although these holy writings which proceed of God's spirit, do not take their testimony or confirmation from man; yet for more evidence of the truth, God has so provided, that all the principal and most strange and wonderful things recounted in

* Ptol. in l. de fructu. † Moles. Narbon. in lib. Abubacher et Avempace. ‡ Roger Bac. lib. de sex. scient. experimenta lib.

scripture, should be reported also, and confirmed by Infidels, Pagans, Gentiles, and heathen writers themselves; although in some points they differ from the scripture in the manner of their narration, by adjoining superstitions thereunto; which makes the more in approbation of the things; for hereby it appears, they took their histories directly from the bible, but by tradition, and most ancient antiquities of their own.

First then he shows, that the creation of the *I. The creation of the world, Gen. i and ii.* which is the marvel of all marvels, with the infusion of man's soul from God, is both granted and agreed upon, by all these heathen philosophers, whom I have cited before (although the particularities be not set down by them, as they are in the scriptures) and by all others that do seem in reason, that of necessity, there must be yielded some Creator of these things. Next to this, the flood of Noah, *Gen. vi. vii. viii.* is mentioned by *II. The flood of Noah.* divers most ancient heathen writers; as by Berosus Chaldeus, Hieronimus Egyptius, Nicolas Damascenus, Abydenus, and others, according as both Josephus* and Eusebius† do prove. And in Brazil and other countries discovered in our age, where teachers were never known to be before, they talk of a certain drowning, of the world, which in times past happened; and do say, that was left them by tradition from time out of mind, by the first inhabitants of those places.

Of the long life of the first patriarchs, *Gen. v. and x. xi.* according as the scripture reports it, not only the former authors, but also Manethus, that gathered the history of the Ægyptians; Molus Hestæus, that wrote the acts of the Phœnicians, Hesiodus, Hecatæus, Abderita, Helanicus, Acusilus, and Ephorus, do testify, that these first inhabitants of the world lived commonly a thousand years a piece; and they allege the reason thereof to be, both for the multiplication of the people, and bringing all sciences to perfection, especially astronomy and astrology, which, as they write, could not be brought to sufficient perfection by any one man, that had lived less than six hundred years, in which space the great year, as they call it, returns about.

Of the tower of Babylon, *Gen. xi.* and of the confusion of tongues at the same time, Eusebius,† *IV. Tower of Babylon.*

* Joseph. l. 1. Antq. Jud.

† Euseb. l. 9. de præp. Evang. c. 4.

† Euseb. l. 9, de præpar. cap. 4.

cites the testimonies at large, both of Abydenus, that lived about king Alexander's time; and Syballa; as also the words of Hestæus, concerning the land of Sennaar, where it was built. And these Gentiles do show by reason, that if there had not been some such miracle in the division of tongues, no doubt, but all tongues being derived of one, as all men are of one father, the same tongues would have retained the self-same roots and principles, as in all dialects or derivations of tongues we see it come to pass. But now, say they, in many tongues, at this day, we see that there is no likelihood of affinity among them, but all different the one from the other; and thereby it appears, that they were made divers and distinct even from the beginning.

V. *Of A-* Of Abraham and his affairs, *Gen.* xi. xii. xiii. xiv. *brahim.* &c. I have alledged some heathen writers before, as Berosus, Heccatæus, and Nicolaus Damascenus. But of all others, Alexander Polyhistor* alleges Eupolemus most at large of Abraham's being in Egypt, and of his teaching them astronomy there; of his fight and victory in the behalf of Lot; of his entertainment by king Melchisedech: of his wife and sister Sarah; and of other things he did, especially of the sacrifice of his son Isaac. With whom agrees Melo,† in his books written against the Jews, and Artabanus.‡ And of the strange lake whereinto Sodom and Gomorrah were turned by their destruction, called *mare mortuum*, the dead sea, wherein nothing can live, both Galen,§ Pausanias, Solinus, Tacitus, and Strabo, do testify, and show the particular wonders thereof.

VI. *Of Isaac,* From Abraham down to Moses, *Gen.* xv. xvi. *Jacob, Job,* xvii. xviii., &c., writes very particularly the fore-*Joseph, &c.* named Alexander, although he mingles sometimes some fables, whereby it appears, that he took his history not wholly out of the Bible. And he alleges one Leodemus, who, as he says, lived with Moses, and wrote the self-same thing that Moses did; so that these writers agree almost in all things touching Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and all their affairs even unto Moses; and with these do concur also Theodotus, a most ancient poet, Artabanus and Philon, Gentiles. Aristæus,|| in like manner, about Aristotle's time, wrote a book of Job.

VII. *Of Moses.* Of Moses and his acts, *Exod.* ii. iii. iv. v., &c.,

* Alex. Poly. lib. de Judaica historia. † Melo lib. de fraudibus Judæorum. ‡ Artiban. in Judæor. his Gal. de simplic. § Pausan. in Ellice Solin in hist. Tacit. lib. ult. hist. || Aristæus l. de Job.

not only the forenamed, especially Artabanus, in his book of the Jews, do make mention at large, but many others also ; as namely, Eupolemus out of whom Polyhistor recites very long narrations of the wonderful and stupendous things done by Moses in Egypt, for which he says, that in his time, he was worshipped as a god in that country, and called by many *Mercurius* ; and that the Ethiopians learned circumcision of him, which afterwards they always retained, and do so unto this day. And as for his miracles done in Egypt ; his leading the people thence by the Red Sea ; his living with them forty years in the desert, the heathen writers agree in all things with the scriptures, saving only, that they recount divers things to the praise of Moses, which he has not written of himself ; adding also his description ; to wit, that he was a long tall man, with a yellow beard, and long hair. Wherewith also agrees Numenius Pythagoricus, touching the acts of Moses, whose life, he says, that he read in the most ancient records that were to be had.

But the forenamed Eupolemus, goes yet forward, and pursues the history of Joshua, of the Judges, of Saul and David, and of Solomon, even unto the building of the temple, which he describes at large, with the particular letters written about that matter to the king of Tyrus, which Josephus* says, were in his days kept in the records of the Tyrians. And with Eupolemus, agree Polyhistor, and Heccatæus Abderita, that lived and served in the war with king Alexander the great : and they make mention, amongst other things, of the inestimable riches of Solomon, and of the treasures which he did hide and bury, according to the fashion of that time, in the sepulchre of his father David : which though not mentioned by the scripture, Josephus† well proves to be no fable ; for that Hircanus the high-priest, and king of Jury, besieged in Jerusalem, by Antiochus, surnamed Pius, not many years before Christ's nativity, to redeem himself and the city, and to pay for his peace,‡ opened the said sepulchre of David, and fetched out of the one part thereof, three thousand talents in ready money, which amounts to six hundred thousand pounds English,

The description of Moses' person out of heathen writers

VIII. The history of Joshua, the Judges, and the Kings.

The treasure hidden in the sepulchre of David.

* Joseph. l. 8. de antiq. cap. 2.

† Joseph. lib. 13. de ant. cap. 16.

‡ Herod attempted the same thing in his time, as Josephus says, lib. 18. antiq.

if we account the talents but at the least size, of *Talentum Hebraicum*.

IX. *Things that ensued after Solomon's days.* And as for the things which ensued after Solomon, as the division of the tribes among themselves; and their divers wars, afflictions, and transmigrations into other countries, many heathen writers do mention and record them; and among others Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus. And the aforementioned Alexander Polyhistor, talking of the captivity of Babylon, says that Jeremiah, a Prophet, *Jer.* xxxii. told Joachim his king, what would befall him; and Nebuchadonosor, *4 Reg.* xxiv. hearing thereof, was moved thereby to besiege Jerusalem.

Of Senacherib. Of the flight of Senacherib from the siege of Jerusalem, and how he was killed at his return home by his own children in the temple, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, *Isa.* xxxi., and xxxiii., and xxxvi., and history of the book of Kings, *4 Reg.* xix. because he had blasphemed the Lord God of Israel, Herodotus witnesses, that after his death he had a statue or image of metal erected in his memory with this inscription in Greek,* 'He that beholds me let him learn to be Godly.' Confer Xenophon also in his seventh book *De Cyropædia*, and you will see him agree with Daniel, *Dan.* xvi. in his narration of Babylon.

And finally, I will conclude with Josephus the learned Jew, that wrote immediately after Christ's ascension, and protests, that the public writings of the Syrians, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, and innumerable histories of the Grecians, are sufficient to testify the antiquity, truth, authority, and certainty of holy scriptures, if there were no other proof in the world besides.

SECT. IV.—*The Conclusion of the Chapter, with the Application.*

THUS far have I treated of the way and means, which have been left to the world from the beginning, thereby to know and understand their Maker. In treating which point, I have enlarged myself the more, because it is the ground and foundation of all that is or may be said hereafter. It is the first, and final and chief principle of our eternal salvation or damnation, and of the happiness or misery that must befall us, and be our everlasting lot.

Which ground and verity, if it be so certain, and evident as before has been shown by all reason and proof, both di-

*Joseph, l. 1. de Antq. Jud.

vine and human ; and the matter is so testified and proclaimed unto us, by all the creatures of heaven and earth, and by the mouth and writing of our Creator himself, that no ignorance or blindness can excuse the same ; no slothful-
 ness dissemble it ; no wickedness deny it ; what re-
 mains then but to consider with ourselves, what ser-
 vice this God requires at our hands ; what gratitude, what duty, what honour, we owe for our creation ; to the end, that as we have proved him a most bountiful Creator, so we may find him a most propitious judge and munificent rewarder. For it is not probable his divine majesty, who has appointed every other creature to act in some manner for his own glory, as has been declared at large before, should leave mankind only, which is the worthiest of all the rest, without any obligation of serving him.

*No excuse
of the igno-
rance of God*

*The errors of
the old phi-
losophers.*

In which one point, notwithstanding though ever so clear, such is the foolishness of our corrupt nature without God's holy grace, have failed those ancient wise men of the world, of whom St. Paul speaks so much in the epistle to the Romans, *Rom. i.* taking compassion of their case, and calling them fools, and all their great learning and philosophy mere folly ; for that whereas, by the means before mentioned, they came to know God ; they did not seek to glorify him, as appertains unto God ; nor yet did render him due thanks, but vanished away in their cogitations ; that is, that took no profit by this knowledge of theirs, but applied their cogitations upon the vanities of this world, more than upon the honour and service of this their God. For which cause St. Paul adjoins presently in the same place, that for so much as they did thus, and did not show forth by their life and works that they had the knowledge of God indeed: God delivered them over to a reprobate sense, and suffered them to fall into horrible sins : which St. Paul does name and detest in all that chapter ; and finally concludes, that their everlasting perdition ensued principally upon this one point, that whereas they knew the justice of God, by all the ways and arguments that before have been declared : yet would they not understand that death was due to all such as lived in wickedness as they did.

And the same apostle, upon consideration of these matters, whereupon he dwells long, because of the importance of the subject, pronounces in fine this
 general sentence, with great asseveration and vehemency of spirit, *Rom. 1.* ' For the wrath of God from heaven

*A general
sentence pro-
nounced by
St. Paul.*

‘ is revealed upon all impiety and injustice of those men that detain the verity of God in injustice; because that of God which ‘ is known, is manifested in them.’ That is, who being endued with the knowledge of God, do live notwithstanding unrighteously : or, as he said before, do consume their days in vanity, not making an account of the service which they do owe to that God, for their creation and other benefits. Which thing, if St. Paul might truly say unto these Gentiles before his time, who had only natural knowledge and understanding of God : that is, so much as by his creatures was to be gathered ; what may or shall be said unto us, who have not only that light of nature which they had, but also the law and writings of God himself, communicated especially unto the Jews ; and above that also, have heard the voice of his only Son upon earth, and have received the doctrine of his most holy gospel, and yet do live as negligent, many of us, as did the very heathens in regard to good and virtuous life. *The application to ourselves.*

Surely in this case, I must denounce against myself, that if it be true, as it cannot be false, which this blessed apostle affirms here of these heathen philosophers, that by that little knowledge they had of God, *Rom. i.* ‘ they were made inexcusable :’ then by the most just and certain rule of Christ laid down in St. Luke, *Luke xii.* ‘ every one to whom much ‘ was given, much shall be required of him’ for the same ; we are forced to infer, that our account will be greater, and ourselves much more inexcusable before his divine majesty, than the very Gentiles and heathens are, if after all our knowledge and manifest understanding of his Godhead and justice, we vanish away in our cogitations, as they did, and as most part of the world at this day are seen to do ; that is, if we apply our thoughts and cares about the vain affairs of this temporal life and transitory commodities, which we should bestow upon the service and honour of this Lord and Creator.

CHAPTER III.

Of the final End and Cause why Man was created by God, and placed in this World.

SECT. I.—*That man being created to serve God, whatsoever takes him from this end is vanity.*

By the chapter precedent, I nothing doubt, gentle reader, but if thou hast seen and perused the same, thou remainest sufficiently informed of thy Creator. Now follows it, by order of good consequence, that we consider with *A necessary consideration.* some attention, because it is of great importance to us, what intent and purpose God had in creating us, and this world for our sakes, and in placing us therein, as lords of the same. By the former considerations we have learn', that as among other creatures, nothing made itself; so nothing was made for itself, nor to serve itself alone. The heavens, we see, do serve the air; the air serves the earth; the earth serves beasts; the beasts serve man; and then is the question, whom was man made to serve? for in him also holds the former reason, that since he was not made by himself, it is not likely that he was made to serve himself.

If we consult with the scriptures herein, we find a general sentence laid down without exception: *Prov. xvi. Universa propter semitipsum operatus est Dominus.* Our Lord has made all things for himself. And if all, then man likewise, no doubt, who is not the least part of the rest which he has made. And hereby it comes to pass, that man cannot be said to be free, or at his own appointment or disposition *Man made to serve God.* in this world, but obliged to perform that thing for which he was sent into this habitation. Which point a friend of holy Job declares plainly, in a certain invective, that he makes against such men as were careless and negligent in consideration of this affair. *Job. xi.* 'A vain man (says he) is extolled into pride, and thinks himself born free, as a wild ass colt.' That is, he thinks himself bound to nothing, subject to nothing, accountable for nothing, that he does in this life; but only born free, to pass his time in sport and pleasure, as a wild colt in a desert, that has no master to tame him. Which, in other words, the wise man utters thus: *Sap. xv.* 'They esteemed our life to be a pastime, and the conversation of life made for gain,' and therefore cares not how he lives, or wherein he spends and passes over the time. And this of the man whom the scripture calls vain.

But now for the sober, wise, and discreet, of whom it is

written, *Prov.* xv. ‘The path of life above the learned, that ‘he may decline from the lowest hell :’ they are far from so great folly, as to imagine no account will be demanded of our being in this world ; for they have read, *Eccles* xi. that God shall bring unto judgment whatsoever is done, for every fault that is committed. And the christian man knows further by the mouth and asseveration of his Saviour and Redeemer,

Account to be rendered. *Mark* x. that he shall be accountable for every idle word that he utters ; and finally, there is no man that is either of reason, or conversant in the writings and testament of his Creator, but remembers well that among all other irritations, whereby the wicked man is said to provoke God’s patience to indignation, none is more often repeated, or more grievously taken, *Psalms* ix. than that the impious has said in his heart, he will not enquire.

With these men then alone, shall be my speech, in this present chapter, who have a desire to discharge well this account. For attaining whereof, truly, I can give them no better council, instruction or advice, than to do in this case, as a good merchant’s factor is wont to do, when he arrives in foreign countries ; or as a soldier or captain sent by his prince to some great exploit is accustomed, when he comes to the place

Profitable demands and considerations. appointed ; that is, to weigh and consider deeply for what cause he came thither ? why he was sent ; to what end ; what to attempt ; what to prosecute ; what to perform ; what will be expected and required at his hands, upon his return, by him that sent him thither ; for these thoughts will stir him up to attend to that for which he came, and not to employ his time in impertinent affairs. The like would I council a christian to put in use, concerning the case proposed, and to demand of himself, between God and his conscience, why and wherefore, and to what end, he was created and sent hither into this world ? what to do ? wherein to bestow his days ? &c. And then will we find, that for no other cause, matter, or end, was he created and placed here but only to serve God in this life, and by that service to gain heaven and salvation in the life to come. This was the condition of our Creator, as Moses well expresses, *Deut.* iv. that we should be a holy people to serve our God : and this was the consideration of our redemption, foretold by Zachary, before we were yet redeemed, *Luke* i. ‘That without fear of being delivered from the hand of our enemies we ‘may serve him, in holiness and justice before him all our days.’

From this consideration do ensue, two consequences to be observed: whereof the first is, that seeing our end and final cause of being in this world, is to serve God, and thereby to work our own salvation; whatsoever thing we do, or bestow our time in, which either is contrary or impertinent, or not profitable to this end, though it were to gain kingdoms, is but vanity and lost labour, and such as will turn us in time to grief and repentance, if we change not our course; for it is not the matter for which we came into this life, nor whereof we shall be demanded an account; except it be to receive judgment and punishment for the same.

The first consequence upon due consideration of our end.

Secoedly, it follows from the same consideration that seeing our only business and affairs in this world, is to serve our Maker, and save our own souls; and that all other earthly creatures are but here to serve our uses to gain that only end, we should, for our parts, be indifferent to all these creatures; as to riches or poverty; to health or sickness; to honour or contempt; to little learning or much learning; and we should desire only so much or little of either of them, as is best for us, towards the attaining of our said end; which is the service of God, and the salvation of our souls. For whosoever desires, seeks, loves, or uses these creatures, more than for this, be they what they will, either riches, honours, health, dignity, promotion, children, kindred, or the like, runs from his end, for which he came hither.

The second consequence.

By this, then, may a careful christian take some scantling of his own estate with God, and make a conjecture, whether he be in the right way, or no. For if he attends only or principally to this end for which he was sent hither; if his cares, thoughts, studies, endeavours, labours, talk, conversation, and his other actions do run upon this matter, and he cares no more for other commodities in this world, than as they are necessary or profitable unto him for this end; if his days and life are spent in this study of the service of God, and procuring his own salvation in carefulness, fear and trembling, as the apostle, *Philip ii.* advises him, then is he doubtless, a most happy and blessed man; and will at length attain to the blessed kingdom which he expects.

How each man may take a view of his estate.

A right course.

But if he finds himself in a contrary current, that is, not to attend indeed to this matter, for which only he was sent hither; not to have in his heart, and study this service of God, and gaining heaven,

A wrong and dangerous course.

but rather some other vanity of the world, as promotion, wealth, pleasure, sumptuous apparel, magnificent buildings, beauty, favour of princes, advancement of children or family, or any other thing else that appertains not unto this end; if he spends his time about these trifles, having his cares and thoughts, his talk and delight, more in these things, than about the other great business of gaining God's eternal kingdom, for which he was created and placed in this world; then is he, I assure him, in a perilous way, leading directly to perdition; except he alters and changes his course. For most certain it is, that whosoever will not attend unto the service he came for, he will never attain the reward assigned, and promised to that service.

And hence now is opened the reason of so universal a perdition of mankind and of so huge a deluge of souls, as is insinuated by Christ our Saviour, when he denounces, that few are saved, and that the way to ruin and perdition is wide, and many walk that way; but that straight and narrow is the gate to salvation, and few enter thereby: the reason, I say, hereof is evident by this our discourse; for that of thousands that live in the world, scarce one is seen to make any account of that affair, which of all others is the chief and principal. For proof whereof, consider, I pray you, the multitude of all sorts of people upon the earth, and see what their traffic is; *The wrong* see whether they treat this affair or no; see where-
course of the in their care, and study, and thoughts consist: how
world. many thousands find you in christendom, who spend not one hour out of twenty, nor one half day of forty, in the service of God, or business of their soul? how many are there who break their brains about worldly commodities? and how few that are touched with these other thoughts? how many find time to eat, drink, sleep, sport, deck and trim themselves to the view of others; and yet have no time to bestow in this great business of all other business? how many pass over whole days, weeks, months, and years, and finally their whole lives in hawking, hunting, and other pastimes, without regard to this important affair? how many miserable women have you in the world, that spend more days in one year in making up their apparel, and adorning themselves, than they do hours in prayer, for the space of all their life: and what, alas, will become of this people in the end? what will they do, or say, at the day of account? what excuse will they allege? what way will they turn themselves? how will they admire their own folly.

If the merchant's factor which I mentioned before, after many years spent in foreign countries upon his master's expenses, should return at length, and give up his accounts of so much time and money spent in singing ; so much in dancing ; so much in courting ; who would not laugh at so foolish a reckoning ? but being farther demanded by his master, what time he had bestowed upon his merchandise and affairs, for which he was sent ; if the man should answer, that he had not leisure to think upon that thing, because of the great occupation which he had in the other, who would not esteem him worthy of punishment and confusion ? And much more shame and confusion, no doubt, will they sustain, at the last dreadful day, in the face and presence of God and all his angels, who, *Mat. xvi.* being sent into this world to traffic so rich a merchandise, as is the kingdom of heaven, have neglected the same, and have bestowed their studies upon the most vain trifles and follies of this world, without thought or care of the other.

A comparison expressing the vanity of our occupations.

O ye children of Adam, says the spirit of God, *Psalms iv.* why love you vanity and seek after lies ? *Hier. xxii.* why leave you the fountain, and seek after cisterns ? if a golden prize of inestimable value, should be promised to such as would run, and win the same : and when the course or race was begun, if some should step aside and follow flies or feathers, that passed in the air, without regard to the prize proposed, who would not marvel and take pity of their folly ? even so is it with men of this world, if we believe *St. Paul. 2 Cor. ix.* who affirms, that we are all placed together in a course or race, and that heaven is propounded unto us for the prize ; but every man, says he, arrives not thither ; and why, for that most men do step aside and leave the mark. Most men do run awry, and do follow feathers up and down in the air ; most men do pursue vanities, and do weary themselves out in the pursuit thereof, until they can neither run nor go, nor move their limbs any further ; and then, for the most part, it is too late to amend their folly. Will you hear the lamentations of such unfortunate men ? These are their own words, recorded by scripture, *Sap. v.*

‘ We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and
‘ destruction ; and have walked through hard ways ;
‘ but the way of the Lord we have not known :
‘ what hath pride profited us ? or what advantage
‘ hath the boasting of riches brought us ? all those
‘ things are passed away like a shadow, and like a messenger
‘ that runneth on.’

The complaint of worldlings in the end of their life.

The foolish judgment of the world. This is the lamentable complaint at length of such as run awry, and followed a wrong course in their actions of this life. These are they, who pursued riches, honours, pomp, and the like vanities, and forgot the business for which they were sent. These are they, who were esteemed happy men in this world, and thought to run a most fortunate course, in that they heaped much riches together, advanced themselves and their families to great dignities, became great and glorious, and dreadful to others; and finally, obtained whatsoever their lust and concupiscence desired. This made them seem blessed in the eyes of the world, and the way wherein they ran, to be most prosperous and happy. And I make no doubt, by experience of these our times, but they had admirers and enviers in great abundance, who burnt in desire to obtain the same course. And yet when I hear their complaint in this place, and their own confession, wherein they say expressly, *Sap. v.* ‘We senseless men did err from the way of truth:’ When I consider also the addition of scripture, *talía dixerunt in inferno*; they spoke those things when they were in hell: I cannot but esteem their course most miserable, and condemn wholly the judgment of flesh in this affair.

Wherefore, my brother, if you be wise, *Psalm x.* yield not to this deceit of worldly lips and tongues, that use to bless and sanctify such as are in most danger, and nearest to perdition. Lean rather to the sincere council of St. Paul, *Gal. vi.* who would have thee to examine uprightly thy own works and ways, and so to judge of thyself without deceit. If thou walk the way of Babylon, most certain it is, that thou shalt never arrive at the gates of Jerusalem, except thou change thy course. Oh, my brother! what a grief will it be unto thee, when after long labour and much toil, thou shalt find thyself to have gone awry? if a man had travelled but one whole day, and thereby made weary, should understand at night, that all his labour was lost, and that his whole journey was out of the way, it would be a marvellous affliction unto him, no doubt, although no other inconvenience were therein, but only the loss of that day’s travelling, which yet might be recovered and recompensed in the next. But if, besides this, his business was great; if his life depended on his being at a certain hour at the place whither he goes; if the loss of his way were irrecoverable; if the punishment of his error must be death and confusion, and himself were so weary, that he could not stir one foot further: im-

A comparison expressing our grief in the end for our running a wrong course.

agine then what a grievous message this would be unto him, to hear one say, sir you have run amiss, and have ridden wholly out of your way.

So then will it be unto thee, my soul, at the day of death and separation from thy body, if in this life thou attend not to thy salvation, for which thou wert created, but has passed over thy days in following vanities. Thou shalt find thyself astray at the end of thy journey; thou shalt find thyself weary, and forced to say with those miserable damned spirits, *Sap. v.* 'I have walked hard and craggy ways to no purpose; for indeed the way of wickedness is full of thorns and stones, though in show it be covered with fair grass and many flowers.' Thou shalt find at that day, that thou hast lost thy labour, lost thy time, lost all opportunity of thy own commodity. Thou shalt find thy error to be irrecoverable, thy danger unavoidable, thy punishment insupportable, and thy grief and sorrow and calamity inconsolable.

The misery of a soul that has gone awry at the last day.

SECT. II.—*Confirming the same argument by some examples.*

IF any one could behold and feel the inward thoughts of a worldly man's heart at that last instant, when all his honors and pleasures are past, no doubt but he would find him one of another judgment and opinion in things than he was in the height and heat of his prosperity. He does well perceive then, the fondness of those trifles which he followed in this life; though it were to make himself a monarch. If a man did know the thoughts that Alexander the Great had, when by poison he came to die, after all his victories and incredible prosperity: if we knew the thoughts of Julius Cæsar at the day of his murder in the senate-house; after the conquest of all his enemies, and subjecting the whole world to his own only obedience; we should well perceive that they took little pleasure in the ways they had walked, notwithstanding they were esteemed most prosperous and happy by men of this world, whilst they flourished and followed their own vain courses of ambition and oppression of others.

Alexander's death.

Julius Cæsar's death.

Josephus the Jew,* recounts two very rare examples of human felicity in two of his countrymen, to wit, Herod the first, and Agrippa, his nephew, who being but

Two rare examples.

* Joseph. lib. 14, 15, et 18 de antiq. Jud. et de Bel. Jud. lib. 2.

private gentlemen, and in great poverty and misery when they fled to Rome, were exalted upon the sudden, the one by Anthony the Triumvir, and the other by Caligula the emperor, to unexpected great fortunes, and made rich monarchs, and glorious potentates. They were endued at several times with the kingdom and crown of Jury, and that in such ample sort, as never any of that nation after them had the like; for which cause they are called in the Hebrew history, for distinction sake, Herod the great, and Agrippa the great. They ruled and commanded all in their days; they wanted neither silver nor gold, nor pleasures nor pastimes, nor friends nor flatterers. And besides all the gifts of fortune, they abounded also in ornaments and excellency of body and wit. And all this was encreased and made the more admirable by reason of their base and low estate before, in respect whereof their present fortune was esteemed for a perfect pattern of most absolute felicity.

This they enjoyed for a certain space; and to assure themselves of the continuance, they bent all their cares, thoughts and studies, to please the humours of the Roman emperors, as their gods and authors of all their prosperity and felicity upon earth. In respect to whose favours, as Josephus notes, they cared little to violate their own religion of the Jews, or any thing else that was most sacred: and this was esteemed by many, a most wise, politic, prosperous, and happy course. But what was the end and consummation of this their race?

First, Herod, fell sick of such an incurable and loathsome disease; and was tormented in the same with so many terrors and horrible* accusations of his conscience, that he pronounced himself to be the most miserable afflicted creature that ever lived: and so calling one day for a knife to pare an apple, would needs have murdered himself with the same, if his arm had not been stopped by them that stood by. And

The death for Agrippa, Josephus† reports, how that, upon a day which he kept festival in Cæsarea, for the honour of Claudius, the Roman emperor, when he was in his most extreme pomp and glory, in the midst of all his peers and courtiers, coming forth at an hour appointed, all glittering with gold and silver, to make an oration unto the people; his voice, gesture, countenance, and apparel so pleased, that

* This Herod was called Ascalonita, and slew the infants in Bethlehem. Matt. ii. † Joseph. l. 19. cap. 7.

the people began to cry, being solicited thereunto by some flatterers, that it was the voice of God, and not of man : wherein Agrippa taking pleasure and delectation, was* struck presently from heaven with a most horrible putrefaction of all his body, whereof he died ; repeating only to his friends these words in the midst of his torments : ‘ Behold ye me, that do seem to you a god, how miserably I am forced to depart ‘ from you all !’

Now, then, would I demand of these two so fortunate men, who, laying aside all care of God and religion, did follow the preferments of this world so earnestly, and obtained the same so luckily, how they liked this their course and race in the end. Truly, I doubt not, but if they were here to answer for themselves, they would assure us, that one hour rightly bestowed in the service of God, and of their salvation, would have comforted them more, at that last instant, than all the labours and toils, which they took in their lives to please their emperors, and gain the favour and good will of mortal men. I would ask of that famous Antiochus, surnamed illustrious, after all his wars, toils, turmoils, and devastation both of Ægypt, Syria and Jerusalem, what sentiments he was in concerning his former courses, when calling all his friends a little before his death, he used that exclamation which the scripture recounts : *Macha. l. 2 cap. 6. In quantam tribulationem deveni, et in quos fluctus tristitiæ !* Into how great tribulations am I come ! into what floods of sorrow am I fallen !

Use then, O christian, use this experience to thy *Sincere and* advantage ; use it to thy instruction ; use it to thy *profitable* forewarning. That which they are now, thou shalt *counsel.* be shortly : and of all follies it is the greatest, not to profit or fly dangers by the example of others. The difference between a wise man and a fool is, that the one provides for a mischief while time serves, and the other would do it when it is too late. If thou mightest feel now the state and case, wherein thy poor heart will be at the last day, for neglecting the thing that of all others it should have studied, and thought upon most, thou wouldst take from thy meat, and sleep, and other necessities, to repair what is past. Now thou hast time to reform thy course, if thou please, which is no small benefit, if all were known : for in this sense, no doubt, what the wise man says is most true, *Eccle. xix.* ‘ That better it is to be a

* St. Luke said he was stricken by God’s angel, Acts xii. And consider how Josephus agrees with that narration Euseb. l. 2. hist. c. 9.

‘living dog, than a dead lion.’ For while the day time of this life endures, all things amiss may easily be amended; but the dreadful night of death will overtake thee shortly; and then shall there be no more space for reformation.

‘Oh, that they were wise and understood, and would provide for their last!’ *Deut.* xxxii. says another prophet. The greatest wisdom in the world, dear brother, is to look, and attend to our salvation. For as the scripture says most truly, *Eccle.* xxxvii. ‘There is a wise man, wise to his own soul.’ And of this wisdom, it is written in the very same book, as spoken by herself, *Eccle.* xxiv. ‘In me is all grace of way, and truth: in me all hope of life, and virtue.’ In moral actions, and human wisdom, we see that the first and chiefest circumstance is to regard well, and consider the end. And how then do we omit the same in this great affair of the kingdom of heaven? If our end is heaven, what mean we so much to affect ourselves to earth? if our end is God, why *Great folly* seek we so greedily the worldly favour of men? if *and error.* our end is the salvation and eternity of our soul, why do we follow the vanities and temporalities of this life? *Isaiah* lv. ‘Why do you spend money for that which is not bread?’ says God by Isaiah: and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you?—Hearken diligently to me; and your soul shall be delighted.’ If our inheritance is, that we should reign as kings, why put we ourselves in such slavery of creatures? if our birth allows us to feed on bread in our father’s house, why delight we in husks provided for the swine?

But alas! we may say with the wise man in scripture, *Sap.* iv. *Fascinatio nugacitatis, obscurat bona*: the bewitching of worldly trifles does obscure and hide from us the things that are good and profitable to our souls. O most dangerous enchantment! But what! shall this *Error in our course of life is not pardoned.* excuse us? no truly; for the same spirit of God has left recorded, *Hosea* iv. *Populus non intelligens vapulabit*: the people that understand not shall be beaten for it. And another prophet to the same effect pronounces, *Isaiah* xxvii. this people is not wise, and therefore He that made them shall not pardon them; neither shall He, that created them, take mercy upon them. It is written of fools, *Hosea* viii. *Ventum seminabunt, turbinem metent*: they shall sow and cast their seed upon the winds, and shall receive for their harvest nothing else but a storm of tempest. Whereby is signified, that they shall not only cast away and lose their labours, but also be punished and chastised for the same.

Consider then, I beseech thee, dear brother, attentively, what thou wilt do or say, when thy Lord will come at the last day, and ask thee an account of all thy labours, actions, and time spent in this life? when he will require a reckoning of the talents given thee; when he will say, as he said to the farmer or steward in the gospel, *Matt. xxv. and Luke xvi. Redde rationem villicationis tuæ*: give an account of thy stewardship and charge committed unto thee. What wilt thou say when he will examine, and weigh, and try thy doings as gold is examined and tried in the furnace? that is, what end they had? whereto they were applied? to what glory of God? to what profit of thy soul? what measure and weight, and substance they bear? Baltazar, king of Babylon, sitting at his banquet merry, upon a time, espied suddenly certain fingers without a hand, that wrote on the wall over-right against his table, these three Hebrew words, *Dan. v. Mane, Thekel, Phares*: which three words Daniel interpreted in three sentences to Baltazar in this manner: *Mane*, God has numbered thee, Baltazar, and thy kingdom; *Thekel*, He has weighed thee in the goldsmith's balance, and thou art found too light; *Phares*, For this cause he has divided thee from thy kingdom, and has given the same to the Medes and Persians.

O that these three golden and most significant words, engraved by the angel upon Baltazar's wall, were registered upon every door and post in Christendom, or rather imprinted in the heart of each christian; especially the two first, that import the numbering and weighing of all our actions; and that in the weight and balance of the goldsmith, where every grain is espied that is wanting. And if Baltazar's actions, that was a Gentile, were to be examined in so nice and delicate a balance for their trial; and if he had so severe a sentence pronounced upon him, *Dan. v.* that he should be divided from life and kingdom, as he was the same night; for that he was found to have less weight in him than he should have; what shall we think of ourselves, that are christians, of whom it is written above all others, *Sopho. xiv.* 'I will search *Jerusalem* with lamps!' What shall we expect, who have not only less weight than we should have, but no weight at all in most of our actions? What may such men, I say, expect, but only that most terrible threat of division and cutting off, denounced to Baltazar, or rather worse,

A profitable forewarning.

A wonderful adventure that happened to Baltazar, king of Babylon.

If God examines strictly the actions of Infidels, much more of Christians if they are careless.

A dreadful if worse may be ; that is, to be divided from God *division.* and his angels ; from participation with our Saviour ; from communion of saints ; from hope of our inheritance ; from our portion celestial, and life everlasting, according to the express declaration made hereof by Christ himself in these words to the negligent servant, *Matt. xxiv.* ‘ The lord of that servant shall come in a day, that he expecteth not ; and in an hour, that he knoweth not ; and shall separate him, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The conclusion. Wherefore, dear brother, to conclude this chapter, I can say nothing more in this dangerous case, wherein the world so runs astray, but only exhort thee, as the apostle does, *Rom. xii.* not to conform thyself to the common error of worldly men, that leads to perdition. Fall at length to some reckoning, and account with thy life ; and see where thou standest, and whither thou goest. If hitherto thou hast wandered and gone astray, be sorry for the time lost, but pass no further. If hitherto thou hast not considered the weightiness of this affair, make use of this admonition, and remember that it is written, *Prov. ix.* A wise man profits by every occasion. Esteem thy resolution in this one point, the chief work that ever will pass through thy hands in this world, although thou art a monarch and ruler of ten thousand worlds together. And finally, I will end with the very same words wherewith the wise man concludes his whole book, *Eccles. xii. Deum time, et mandata ejus observa ; hoc est enim omnis homo :* Fear God, and observe his commandments ; for this is all man. As if he had said, in this does all and every man consist ; his end, his beginning, his life, and cause of being, that he fear God, and direct his actions to the observance of his commandments ; for without this, he is no man in effect ; seeing he loses all benefit both of his name, nature, redemption, and creation.

CHAPTER IV.

That the service, which God requires of man in this present life, is Religion ; with the particular confirmation of the Christian Religion, above all others in the world.

SECT. I. *Of Religion in general, and the purport of this Chapter.*

HAVING proved in the former chapters, that there is a God, who created man ; and that man in respect hereof, and of *Of religion* other benefits received, is bound to honour and

serve the same God: the question may be made in this place*, what service this is that God requires, and wherein does it consist? whereunto the answer is brief, that it is religion; which is a virtue, that contains properly, the worship and service that we owe unto God; even as piety is a virtue, containing the duty that children owe unto their parents; and observance another virtue, that comprehends the regard that scholars and servants bear unto their masters. In respect of which comparison and likeness between these virtues, God says by a certain prophet, *Mal. i.* ‘The son honoureth his father, and the servant his lord: if then I be the father, where is my honour? if I be the lord, where is my fear?’

The acts of religion are divers and different; some internal, as devotion and prayer; some others external, as adoration, worship, sacrifice, oblation, vows, and such like, that are declarations and protestations of the internal. It extends itself also, to stir up and put in use the acts and operations of other virtues, for the service of God; in which sense St. James says, *James i.* ‘Religion pure and unspotted, with God and the Father, is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation, and to keep one’s self undefiled from this world.’ Finally, howsoever some heathens did use this word religion to some other signification, yet, as St. Augustine† well notes, the use thereof among the faithful has always been to signify thereby the worship, honour, and service that is due unto God: so that if in one word you will have it declared, what God requires of man in this life, it may be rightly said, that all stands in this, that he be religious.

The acts and operations of religion.

How much it importeth to be religious.

From hence proceeded, that whatsoever sort or sect of people of the world professed reverence, honour, or worship to God, or to gods, or to any divine power, essence, or nature whatsoever (were they Jews, Heathens, Gentiles, Christians, Turks, Moors, Hereticks, or others) they did always call their said profession by the name of their religion. In which sense also and signification of the word, I am to treat at this time of the Christian religion; that is, of the substance, form, manner, and way revealed by Christ and his apostles unto us, of performing our duty and true service towards God. Which service is the first point necessary to be resolved upon by him

* See St. Thom. 2. 2. quest. 81, 82, 83. † Aug. 1. 10. de. civ. c. i.

that seeks his salvation, as in the foregoing chapter has been declared : and for obtaining this service, and true knowledge thereof, no way upon earth is left unto man, but only by the light and instruction of christian religion, according to the protestation of St. Peter to the governors of the Jews, when he said, *Acts* iv. There is no other name under heaven given unto men whereby we must be saved, but only this of Christ and of his religion.

If you object against me, that in former times before Christ's nativity, as under the law of Moses for two thousand years together, there were many saints that without christian religion, served God uprightly, as the prophets and other holy people ; and before them again, in the law of nature, when neither Christian nor Jewish religion was yet heard of for more than two thousand years, there wanted not divers

*How men
were saved
in old times
without
christian
religion.*

that pleased God, and served him truly, as Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Jacob, and others : I answer, that although these men (especially the former, that lived under the law of nature) had not so particular and express a knowledge of Christ and his mysteries, as we have now ; for this was reserved to the time of grace, as St. Paul in divers places at large declares, that is, though they knew not expressly how and in what manner Christ was to be born, whether of a virgin, or no ; or in what particular sort he would live and die ; what sacraments he would leave ; what way of publishing his gospel he would appoint and the like ; whereof notwithstanding very many particulars were revealed to the Jews from time to time ; and the nearer they drew to the time of Christ's appearance, the more plain revelation was made of these mysteries ; yet I say, all and every one of these holy saints,

*All old
Saints be-
lieved in
Christ, and
were saved
by him.*

that lived from Adam until the coming of Christ, had knowledge in general of christian religion, and did believe the same : that is, they believed expressly that there would come a Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, to deliver them from the bondage contracted by the sin of Adam.

This was revealed immediately after their fall, to our first parents and progenitors in paradise, to wit, that by the *woman's seed*, our redemption should be made. In respect whereof it is said in the Revelations, that Christ is the lamb that has been slain from the beginning of the world. And as St. Peter in the first general council holden by the apostles, affirms that the old ancient fathers, before Christ's nativity,

were saved by the grace of Christ, as we are now ; which St. Paul confirms in divers places. And finally, the matter is so clear in this behalf, that the whole school of divines agree, that the faith and religion of the old fathers before Christ's appearance, was the very same in substance that ours is now ; saving only, that it was more general, obscure, and confined than ours is ; for that it was of things to come, as ours is now of things past and present.

For example, they believed a Redeemer to come, *The differences between our belief and the old fathers.* and we believe that he is already come. They said, *Virgo concipiet*, a virgin shall conceive ; and we say, *Virgo concipit*, a virgin has conceived. They had sacrifices and ceremonies that prefigured his coming for the time ensuing ; we have sacrifice and sacraments that represent his being for the time present. They called their redeemer, *Isaiah vii.* and *Gen. xlix.* 'The expectation of nations ;' and we call him now 'The salvation of nations.' And finally, there was no other difference between the old faith of good men from the beginning and ours ; but only the circumstance of time, clearness, particularity, and the manner of protesting the same by outward signs and ceremonies. For in substance they believed the same Redeemer that we do ; and were saved by the same belief in his merits as we are. For which cause Eusebius* well notes, that as we are now called christians, so they were then called *christi*, that is anointed in prefiguration of the true Christ, in whom they believed, as the first and head of all others anointed ; and who was the cause and author of their anointing.

By this then it is most manifest, that not only now to us that are christians, but at all other times from the beginning of the world, and to all other persons and people whatsoever, that desired to save their souls, it was necessary to believe and love Christ, and to profess in heart his religion ; for which consideration, I thought it not amiss in this place, after the former grounds laid, to wit, that there is a God, and that man was created and placed here for his service, to demonstrate and prove also this other principle, that the only service of this God, is by christian religion. Wherein though I do not doubt, but that I shall seem to many, to take *The causes upon me a superfluous labour, in proving a verity, of this which all men in Christendom do confess ; yet for chapter.* the causes before alleged in the second chapter, which mov-

*Eusebius handles this matter at large, l. 1. demon. c. 5.

ed me in that place to prove that there is a God ; that is to say, first, for the comfort, strength, and confirmation of such, as either from the enemy may receive temptations ; or of themselves, may desire to see a reason of their belief ; and secondly, for awakening, stirring up, or convincing of others, who either out of malice, carelessness, or sensuality, are fallen into a slumber, and have lost the feeling and sense of their belief ; (for many such are not wanting in these our miserable days) it will not be, perhaps, from our purpose, to lay together in this place, with the greatest brevity that possibly may be, the most sure grounds, and invincible evidences, which we have for declaration and confirmation of this matter.

For notwithstanding, as the apostle St. Paul declares, *Heb. xi.* the things which we believe are not such in themselves, as may be made apparent by reason or human argument : for our faith, that is, the assent of our judgment to the things propounded by God unto us, must be voluntary, to the end it may be meritorious : yet such is the goodness and most sweet proceeding of our merciful God towards us, that he will not leave

The divers testimonies from God of the things that we believe.

himself without sufficient testimony both inward and outward, as the same apostle in another place, *Acts xiv.* does testify : because that inwardly he testifies the truth of such things as we believe, by giving us light and understanding, with internal joy and consolation in believing them. And outwardly he gives testimony to the same, with so many conveniencies, probabilities, and arguments of credibility, as divines do call them, that although the very point of that which is believed remains still with some obscurity, to the end there may be place for our will and merit ! yet are there so many circumstances of likelihood, to induce a man to the belief thereof ; that in all reason it may seem against reason to deny or mistrust them.

This will easily appear by the following treatise of Christ and christianity, and of the foundation of our religion ; which shall be confirmed by so many pregnant reasons, and most manifest circumstances of evident probability, that I doubt not but the zealous christian will take exceeding comfort therein, and esteem himself happy, to have a lot in that faith and religion, where he will see and feel so much reason, proof and conveniency to concur and show itself for his satisfaction.

And to this effect, it will be of no small moment, that I have proved before, the certainty, divinity, and infallible truth of the Jews' scriptures, or Old Testament ; which writings we have received from that nation, that does, as it were, profess

enmity against us ; and the same being written so many ages before the name of Christianity was known in the world, whatsoever will be alleged out of those records for our purpose, cannot but be of singular authority. And therefore, as before, in proving our first principle, *that there is a God*, we used only the testimony of such witnesses as could not be partial, so much more in this confirmation of christian religion, we will only stand, either upon the confessions of such as are our enemies, or upon the records of others, who must needs be indifferent in the cause, because they lived before either cause or controversy in christianity was known or called in question.

The undoubted witnesses to be alleged in this chapter.

My whole purpose shall be then to make manifest in this chapter, that Jesus Christ was the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, fore-promised and expected from the beginning of the world ; that he was the Son of God, and God himself ; and consequently, that whatsoever he has left us in his doctrine and religion, is true and sincere, and the only way of salvation upon earth. For clearer proof and declaration whereof, I will reduce whatsoever I have to say herein, into three principal heads or branches, according to the order of three distinct times wherein they fell out ; that is to say, in the first place shall be considered, the things that passed before the nativity or incarnation of Christ. In the second, the things done and verified from that time unto his ascension ; which is the space of his abode upon earth. And in the third place, such events shall be considered, as ensued for confirmation of his deity after his departure.

The drift of this chapter.

The principal heads.

In proving of which three general points, I hope by the assistance of Him, whose cause we handle, that so many clear demonstrations will be discovered, as will greatly confirm thy faith, gentle reader, and remove all occasions of temptations to infidelity.

SECT. II.—*How Christ was foretold to Jew and Gentile.*

FIRST then, for such things as passed before Christ appeared in flesh, and do make for proof of our christian religion, it is to be noted, that they are of two sorts, or at least, they are to be taken from two kind of people ; that is, partly from the Jews, and partly from the Gentiles. For seeing that he was appointed from the beginning, and before the world was crea-

ted, as St. Paul affirms,* to work the redemption both of Jew and Gentile, and to make them both one people in the service of his Father ; hence it is, that he was foretold and presignified to both these nations†, and divers forewarnings were left among them both, to stir them up to expect his coming, as by the considerations following will most evidently appear.

The first consideration. And to begin with Jews, no man can deny, but that throughout the whole body and course of their scriptures, that is, from the very beginning to the last ending of their Old Testament, they had promised to them a MESSIAS, which is the same thing that we call Christ; that is to say, a person anointed and sent from God to be a Saviour, a Redeemer, a pacifier of God's wrath, a mediator between God and man, a satisfier for the sins and offences of the world, a restorer of our innocency lost in paradise, a master and instructor, a law-giver, and finally, a spiritual and eternal king, that should sit and rule, and reign in our hearts, to conquer the power and tyranny of satan, that overcame our first parents, and assails us daily.

I. The first covenant to Adam. This is evident by the first covenant of all that ever God did make with man, when he said to Adam, Adam, our first father in paradise, *Gen. ii.* 'In what day soever thou shalt eat' of the tree that is forbidden, 'thou shalt die.' Which covenant being after broken on the part of our said progenitor, he received his judgment; but yet with a most benign promise of redemption for the time to come: for thus God said to the devil or serpent, that had deceived him, *Gen. iii.* 'I will put enmities between—thy seed, and the seed of her; she shall bruise thy head in pieces.' That is, one shall proceed, in time, of the seed of the woman, who shall conquer death and sin, that are thy weapons, and shall not care for thy temptations, but shall tread them under his feet; and this shall be Christ the Messias of the world. Thus did not only the‡ eldest Jews and Rabbins understand this place (howsoever the latter dreamed that their Messias would be only a temporal king) but also the old Chaldee paraphrase, named *Thargum Hierosolymitanum*,§ expounds it plainly in these words, applied unto the devil that had deceived Adam, *Gen. iii.* 'They have a certain and present remedy against thee, O devil; for the time shall come, when they shall tread thee down with their heels, by the help of Messias, who shall be their king.'

* Ephes. i. 1 Tim. ii. 1 Pet. i. † Isa. ii. xvi. Jer. ix. xii. xvi. ‡ Rabbi Moses Benmaimon in hunc locum. § Thar. Hier. 11.

The same is confirmed by the very same promise, *II. To Abraham and Isaac.* seven times repeated and established unto Abraham, that lived very near two thousand years after Adam; and again to Isaac his son after him, *Gen. xii. In semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes terræ:* all nations of the earth shall be blessed in thy seed. Which had been indeed but a very small benediction to Abraham, or to other Jews after him, that never saw this Messias actually, if he had been only to be a temporal king; and much less blessing had it been to Gentiles and other nations, if this Messias of the Jews must have been a temporal and worldly monarch, to destroy and subdue them under the servitude of Jewry, as vainly these latter teachers of that nation do contend.

This the patriarch Jacob makes yet more plain, who prophecying at his death of the coming of Christ, has these words, *Gen. xlix. 'The sceptre,' or government, 'shall not be taken away from Judah—till He come that is to be sent, and the same shall be 'the expectation of the Gentiles,'* Which latter words, the fore-named Chaldee paraphrase,* as also the great Onkelos (both of singular authority among the Jews) do interpret thus: *Donec Christus sive Messias veniat, &c.* Until Christ or the Messias comes, who is the hope and expectation of all nations, as well Gentiles, as of us that are Jews, the government shall not cease in the house or tribe of Judah. By which sentence of scripture, and interpretation of the Jews themselves, we come to learn, besides the promise for the Messias, two consequences in this matter, against the Jews of later time. First, that if their Messias must be the hope and expectation as well of Gentiles as of Jews; then can he not be a temporal king to destroy the Gentiles, as the later Jews would have it, but a spiritual king to reign over them, and to bring in subjection their spiritual enemies for them, I mean the flesh, world, and devil, as we christians do believe. Secondly, if the temporal kingdom of the house of Judah, whereof Christ must come, will cease and be destroyed at the coming of Messias, as the scripture avouches, how then can the Jews expect a temporal king for their Messias, as most vainly they do?

But to leave this controversy with the later Rabbins, and go forward in the declaration of that which we took in hand, that is, to show how Christ was foretold and fore-promised to

* Lib. et Onkelos in hunc locum.

the Jews : it is to be noted, that after the death of Jacob last mentioned, there is little recorded in scripture of the doings of his people, during the four hundred years of their bondage in Egypt. Yet the tradition of that nation teaches, that as soon

*The tradi-
tion of the
Jews in
Misdrach
Thehilim.*

as they were delivered out of Egypt, and were in the desert, towards the land of promise, the three sons of Chore, called Aser, Aleana, and Abiasaph, of whom there is mention in the sixth chapter of *Exodus*, and elsewhere, made divers songs and psalms in the praise and expectation of the Messias to come ; and that the holy men of that time did solace themselves with singing the same : and king David afterwards, in the second part of his Psalms,* beginning from the forty-first unto the eighty-seventh, gathered the most part of those old songs together, as yet may be seen in the psalter.

V. *Moses'* But Moses, who lived with that people, and go-
prophecy of verned them in the wilderness, had a clear revela-
Christ. tion from God of this Messias, in these words, *Deut.*

xviii. ' A prophet I will raise up to them out of the midst of
' their brethren, like to thee : and I will put my words into his
' mouth, and he shall speak *unto them* all things, that I shall
' command him : but he that will not hear his words which he
' shall speak in my name, I will be the revenger.' Which
words, that they cannot be understood of any other prophet
that ever lived after Moses among the Jews, but only of
Christ, it appears plainly by this testimony of the Holy Ghost,
Deut. xxxiv. ' And there arose not any other prophet in Is-
' rael like unto Moses,' &c.

VI. *Da-
vid's pro-
phesies of
Christ.*

After Moses, about four hundred years, lived king
David : who as he was a holy man, and the first
king of Judah, out of whose lineage the Messias
was to come ; the particulars of this mystery were
more abundantly revealed unto him, than unto any other. And
first, for assurance that Christ should be born of his stock and
lineage, these are the words of God unto him : † ' I have
' sworn to David my servant ; for ever will I prepare thy seed :
' and I will build thy seat unto generations and generations.'
Which words, though the later Jews will apply to king Solo-
mon, that was David's son (and in some sense they may be
so, for that Solomon was a figure of Christ to come) yet pro-
perly these words, ‡ And his kingdom shall stand for ever,

* See the title of these Psalms, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 82, 84, 86, 87.

† Psalm 88, 2. Reg. 7. 1. Para. 22. ‡ 3 Reg. 5. 1. Para. 22.

and for all eternity, which are so often repeated in this, and other places of scripture, cannot be verified in Solomon, whose earthly kingdom was rent and torn in pieces directly after his death by Jeroboam, and not long after as it were, extinguished : but they must needs be understood of an eternal king, which should come of David's seed, as must also these other words of God in the Psalms, *Psal.* ii. 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee : ask of me and I will give thee the Gentiles for thine inheritance.' Which was never fulfilled in Solomon nor in any temporal king of Jewry after him. And much less these words that follow : *Psalms* lxxi. 'He shall continue with the sun, and before the moon, throughout all generations. In his days shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace, till the moon be taken away ; and he shall rule from sea to sea ; and all kings of the earth shall adore him, all nations shall serve him ; for he shall deliver the poor from the mighty—he shall redeem their souls from usuries and iniquity. And in him shall all tribes of the earth be blessed ; all nations shall magnify him.'

These words of Christ's eternal kingdom ; of his enduring to the world's end ; of his universal reign over Jew and Gentile ; of his being adored by all nations ; of his delivering of souls from the bondage of iniquity ; and finally, of his making blessed all tribes of the earth, cannot possibly be applied to any temporal king that ever was among the Jews, or ever will be, but only to Christ.

This promise made unto David, that Christ should come of his seed, is repeated after his death by many prophets, and confirmed by God, as in Jeremiah, where God uses these words, *Jer.* xxiii. 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, and I will raise up to David a just branch, and a king shall reign, and shall be wise ; and he shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In those days shall Judah be saved ; and Israel shall dwell confidently ; and this is the name that they shall call him,—The Lord our Just One.' All this was spoken of David's seed above four hundred years after David was dead ; which proves manifestly, that the former promises and speeches were not made to David for Solomon, or for any other temporal king of David's line, but for Christ, who was called so peculiarly *the son and seed of David* ; for that David was the first king of the tribe of Judah ; and not only was Christ's progenitor in flesh, but also did bear his type and figure in many other things.

VII. *Jeremiah's prophecy touching Christ.*

VIII. *Ezekiel's prophecy of Christ.* For which cause likewise in the prophet Ezekiel, who lived about the same time that Jeremiah did, the Messias is called by the name of David himself.

For thus God spoke at that time unto Ezekiel, *Ezek. xxxiv.* 'I will save my flock : and it shall be no more a spoil. 'I will set up one *Shepherd* over them, and he shall feed them, 'even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd ; and I the Lord will be their God—and I will make a covenant of peace with them,' &c. In which words, not only we that are christians, but the later Jews themselves also do confess in their Thalmud,* Messias is called by the name of David, for that he was to descend of the seed of David ; and by reason also it must needs be so ; for king David being dead four hundred years before these words were spoken, as has been noted, could not now come again, to feed God's people, or govern them himself.

IX. *The prophecies of Isaiah touching Christ.* Isaiah the prophet, who lived about a hundred years before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, had marvellous fore-knowledge of the Messias and his affairs, and describes him very particularly, beginning in this manner, *Isaiah ii.* 'In the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains ; and all nations shall flow unto it ; and many people shall go, and say, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord ; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths ;—he shall judge the Gentiles,' &c. Which words are repeated in Micheas the prophet, *Mich. iv.* and are applied there, as also here, unto the Messias, and can have no other meaning by the judgment of the Jews and Hebrews themselves. And Isaiah does pursue the same matter afterwards in divers chapters ; as for example, in the fourth, talking of the same Messias, which before he calls the *Mountain of God's house*, he adds these words ; 'In that day the bud of the Lord shall be in magnificence and glory ; and the fruit of the earth shall be high, and exultation to them that shall have escaped of Israel.' In which words he calls the Messias both the issue of God, and the fruit of the earth ; because he should be both God and man. And in the ninth chapter he calls him by these terms : 'Marvellous, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace.'

In the eleventh chapter he describes him most wonderfully

* Thalm. tract. Sanh. cathelec.

in these words : ‘ And there shall come forth a rod out of the
 ‘ root of Jesse (which Jesse was David’s father) and a flower
 ‘ shall rise up out of his root, and the spirit of the Lord shall
 ‘ rest upon him ; the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding ;
 ‘ the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge
 ‘ and of godliness—he shall not judge according to the sight
 ‘ of the eyes, nor reprove according to the hearing
 ‘ of the ears ; but he shall judge the poor with jus- *Wonderful*
 ‘ tice ; and shall reprove with equity for the meek *properties*
 ‘ of the earth : and he shall strike the earth with the rod of *of Christ.*
 ‘ his mouth ; and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the
 ‘ wicked.—And justice shall be the girdle of his loins ; and
 ‘ faith the girdle of his reins,’ &c. Hitherto are the words of
 the prophet, wherein nothing truly can be more plain and evi-
 dent, than that by the *rod or branch of Jesse, is meant the Vir-
 gin Mary, who directly descended from the lineage of Jesse ;
 and by the flower ascending from this branch, must needs be
 understood Christ, who was born of her, and had all those
 excellencies and privileges above other men, which Isaiah in
 this place assigns unto him.

Whose further graces yet, and special divine pro- *Other pro-*
 perties the same prophet expresses more particu- *perties of*
 larly in the chapters following, where he says, *Isa.* *Christ.*

xxv. 8. That he shall for ever overthrow and destroy death ;
Isa. xxv. 5. that then shall the eyes of the blind be opened,
 and the ears of the deaf ; *Isa.* xlii. 2. that he shall not cry,
 neither shall his voice be heard abroad ; that he shall bring
 forth judgment in truth : that he shall not be sorrowful nor
 turbulent, &c. And finally, in the forty-ninth chapter, he
 alleges the words of God the father unto Christ, touching his
 commission, in this sort : *Isa.* xlix. ‘ It is a small *The com-*
 ‘ thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up *mission of*
 ‘ the tribes of Jacob, and to convert the dregs of *Christ.*
 ‘ Israel.’ *Acts* xiii. ‘ Behold I have given thee to be the
 ‘ light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation even
 ‘ to the farthest part of the earth.’

And to conclude this matter, without alleging *The pro-*
 more prophecies for the same, which in truth are *phhecy of*
 infinite throughout the bible ; Daniel that lived in the *Daniel*
 end of the captivity of Babylon, a little before Ag- *touching*
 geus, Zacharias, and Malachias, who were the last *Christ.*
 prophets that ever flourished amongst the Jews, almost five

* Matt. i. Luke iii. Acts xiii. Rom. xv.

hundred years before the nativity of Christ ; this Daniel, I say, reports of himself, that being in Babylon, and having fasted, worn hair cloth, and prayed long unto God ; there came the angel Gabriel unto him, at the time of evening sacrifice, and foretold him, not only the deliverance of the people of Israel from the captivity of Babylon out of hand (for the seventy years of their punishment foretold by Jeremiah, were now expired) but also told him further, that the time of the universal deliverance of mankind from the bondage and captivity of sin, was now shortened ; and that after seventy *hebdomades*, (which as shall be showed afterwards, make up just the time that passed from rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, after their deliverance from Babylon unto the birth of Christ) there should be born the Saviour of the world ; and be put to death for the redemption of mankind.

The angel's words are these : *Dan.* ix. 23, &c. 'I am come to show it to thee, because thou art a man of desires ; therefore do thou mark the word, and understand the vision. Seventy weeks are shortened upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, that transgression may be finished, and sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished ; and everlasting justice may be brought ; and vision and prophesy may be fulfilled, and the *Saint of Saints* may be anointed. Know thou therefore, and take notice, that from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the *Prince*, there shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks, and after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain ; and the people that shall deny him shall not be his, and a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the Sanctuary,' &c.

The end

of all scripture. I might pass on further to other prophets, and might be said in this behalf : for the whole scripture runs all to this one point, to foretel and manifest Christ by signs, figures, parables and prophecies ; and for this cause was it principally written. But that which is already spoken will be sufficient for our first consideration, whereby is seen, that among the Jews, from age to age, Christ was prophecied and foretold, together with the eternity of his kingdom that should be spiritual.

The second consideration That Christ should be God and man.

Now follows a second consideration of the quality of Christ's person, no less of importance than the former, and that is of the Godhead of the Messias promised. I say the later Jews or Rabbins are different herein from us ; as also they are in many other points and articles, wherein their ancestors,

that were no christians, did fully agree. Even as all heretics are wont to do, that first break in one point, and then in another from the Catholic faith : and so do run on from one to one, making themselves in all things as dislike as they can, out of hatred to that unity, whereunto their pride will not suffer them to return : so it is in the generation of this reprobate people, who first agreed with us in all, or most points, touching Christ to come, and denied only the fulfilling or application thereof, in Jesus our Saviour ; but afterwards their ungracious offspring being not able to stand in that dispute against us, devised a new plea, and betook themselves to a far higher degree of impiety, affirming that we attributed many things unto Jesus, that were not foretold of the Messias to come : and among others, that he should be God and the Son of God, and the second person in Trinity, &c.

But herein, no doubt, these obstinate and graceless men do show themselves both ignorant of their own scriptures, and disagreeing from the writings of their own forefathers. For, as for scriptures, it is evident by all, or most of the *That Christ* prophecies asserted before, that Christ should, or the *must be both* Messias must be God, and the Son of God endued *God and* with man's nature ; that is both God and man. So *man.* in Genesis, where he is called : *Gen. iii. 15.* The seed of the woman ; it is apparent he is to be man ; and in the same place where he is promised : To crush the devil and *The first* break his head ; who can do this but only God ? *proof.* likewise when he is called : ' The bud of our Lord ; ' his God-head is signified : as is his manhood also, when in the same place he is named : ' The fruit of the earth. ' Who can interpret these speeches : * ' That His kingdom shall be everlasting : That He shall endure until the moon be taken away, ' and after : That God begat Him before Lucifer was created : ' That no man can tell or recount His generation : That all ' nations and angels must adore Him : That He must sit at the ' right hand of God ; ' and many other such like speeches pronounced directly, and expressly of the Messias ; who, I say, can understand, or interpret them but of God ; seeing that in man they cannot be verified ?

And as for the last of these testimonies concerning Christ's sitting at his Father's right hand : three† of our evangelists do report that Jesus did confound divers of the learned Pha-

* Psal. lxxi. Psal. cix. Isaiah liii. Psal. xevi. Heb. i. Psal. cx. † Mat. ii. Mark xij. Luke xx.

risees, with alleging only these words of David, *Psalms* cx. ‘Our Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand, till I make thy enemies the foot-stool of thy feet. For,’ said Jesus, ‘if Christ be David’s son how did David call him his Lord?’ signifying hereby that although the Messiah was to be David’s son according to his manhood; yet was he to be David’s Lord according to his Godhead. And so does both Rabbi Jonathan* and the public commentaries of the Hebrews interpret the place.

Micheas is plain: *Mich.* v. ‘And thou Bethlehem Ephrata—out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity.’ This cannot be understood of any mortal man that ever was, or will be. Yet Isaiah goes further when he says: *Isaiah* ix. ‘A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace,’ &c. In which words, we see that Christ is called God. But if the Jews do cavil here, and say, that *El* or *Elohim*,† the Hebrew word, which we interpret God, in this place may sometimes be applied to a creature; as in Exodus, *Ex.* xv. 11. once *El* signifies an Angel; and *Elohim*, at other times, is applied to Judges; then mark, and consider this discourse of David touching the Messiah, to whom he says, *Psal.* xlv. ‘Thou art beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in thy lips, therefore hath God blessed thee for ever, &c. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of uprightness, thou hast loved justice, and hatedst iniquity; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.’ Here the Messiah is called God twice, by the same word *Elohim*, as God his father is, and therefore, as the word signifies true God in the one, so must it also in the other.

But to remove all ground of this refuge touching *El* and *Elohim*, that are names of God, which may be communicated sometimes and upon some occasions to creatures, most apparent it is, that the name *Jehovah*, which is called *Tetragrammaton*, and which is so peculiar unto God alone, that it never is or can be communicated to others, this name, I say, which is of such

* Rab. Jon. 1. col. et Misdrach. Tehelimon. † So it is in Hebrew.

reverence among the Jews, that they dare not pronounce it ; but in place thereof, do read *Adonai*, that signifies Lord,* is every where almost in scripture attributed to Christ, namely, where the Latin interpreter has translated Lord : as for example, in two divers places of Jeremiah, after the long description of the Messias, which I have before recited, he concludes thus : *Jer. xxiii. Hoc est nomen quod vocabunt eum, Jehovah justus noster*, this is the name which they shall call him, our just *Jehovah* ; or as the Hebrew has word for word, *Jehovah* our *Justice*. And so do the ancient Hebrew expositions confess upon these places of Jeremiah ; namely Rabbi *Abbi*,† who asks the question, what Messias shall be called ; and then he answers out of this last place : ‘ He shall be called the eternal *Jehovah*.’ The like does *Misdrach* gather upon the twentieth psalm, and Rabbi *Moses Hadarsan*,‡ expounding a place of the prophet *Sophonias*, cap. iii. ver. 9. concludes thus : ‘ In this place *Jehovah* signifies nothing else but the Messias.’

Whereby appears, that as well in scripture, as also in the opinion of old Hebrew expositors, the Messias was to be true God and man. And I might allege many other testimonies of ancient Rabbins, if it were not too long : especially, if I would enter among that kind of expositors, whom they call Cabalists, who are more ancient and less brutish than are the other sorts, which are termed Thalmudists, I should find many clear and manifest declarations against the Jews doctrine and error of late times. And amongst others (for example only of cabalistical expositions) I refer the reader to the discourse of Rabbi *Hacadosch*,§ (which in Hebrew signifies the holy Rabbin, and lived not long after Christ) upon the words of Jeremiah, *Jer. xxiii. 7.* before cited ; in which, because he finds the Messias to be called *Jehovah*, which word in Hebrew is compounded of the three letters *Jod*, *Vau*, and *He* twice repeated : this doctor makes his discourse by art *Cabalist* in this manner.

Two sorts
of Hebrew
expositors,
Cabalists
and Thal-
mudists.

‘ Even as the letter *He* in *Jehovah*, is compound-
‘ ed of two other letters, named *Daleth* and *Vau*, as
‘ appears by their form, so shall the Messias, that is
‘ signified by this word *Jehovah*, be made of two natures : the

The caba-
listical dis-
course.

* See Isa. xviii. 7. and xxviii. 5. † Rab. Abba com in Thren. v. 16.
Misd. Thehilim in Psal. xxv. 1. ‡ Rab. Mos. Hada. in Gen. c. xli.
§ Rab. Hacadosch in c. 9. Isa.

‘one divine, and the other human. And as in *Jehovah*, there is twice *He*; and consequently two *Daleths* and two *Vau* contained therein: so are there two births, filiations, or childhoods in *Messias*; the one, whereby he shall be the Son of God, and the other, whereby he shall be the Son of a virgin, which *Isaiah*, *Isa. ii.* calls the prophetess. And as in *Jehovah* the letter *He* is twice put, and yet both *Hes* do make in effect but one letter: so in *Messias* there shall be two distinct natures; and yet they shall make but one Christ.’ Thus talks the Cabalist upon the letters of *Jehovah*, according to the manner of their divinity; and draws great mysteries as you see from letters. In which kind of reasoning, although we put no ground or stress at all; yet it is sufficient to show, that among the elder Jews, it was a known and confessed doctrine, that Christ should be both God and man, and have two natures joined distinctly in one person; which is the same that we christians do affirm.

The fourth proof. Nay, I will add further, and this is greatly to be observed that the self-same ancient Jews as some also of the latter, do hold and prove by scripture; that Christ shall be (for always they speak of the *Messias* to come) the very Son of God *et verbum Dei Incarnatum*, and the word of God incarnate or made flesh. And for the first, *Christ called the Son of God.* that he shall be the Son of God, they prove it out of divers places alleged by me before: as for example out of *Genesis*, where the Latin text has; *Gen. xlix. 10.* The sceptre of *Juda* shall not be taken away, until he come that is to be sent, the Hebrew has, until *Silo* come; which *Silo*, *Rabbi Kimhi** proves by a long discourse, to signify as much, as *filius ejus*, his son, that is the Son of God. The same they prove† by the place of *Isaiah*, *Isa. iv. 2.* where the *Messias* is called *Germen Jehovah*, the seed, or Son of *Jehovah*. Which the *Chaldee* paraphrase turns the *Messias* of *Jehovah*. They prove the same also out of divers *Psalms*, where Christ is called plainly the Son of God: as where it is said, *Psal. xlix.* ‘He shall say unto me, thou art my father, &c. I will put him my eldest son higher than all the kings of the earth,’ &c. ‘*Jehovah* said unto me, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,’ &c. Receive instruction you that judge the earth; blessed are all they that trust in him.’ Which last words can no way be understood of the son of any man, for

* *Rab. David Kimhi*, in l. radicum. † *Tharg. in hunc locum.*

that is written : *Jer.* vii. ‘Cursed is the man that puts his ‘trust in man.’ Wherefore Rabbi Jonathan, Rabbi Nathan, Rabbi Selomoth Aben Ezra, and others, do conclude by these and other places which they allege, that the Messias must be the very Son of God.

And for the second point, they go yet further, affirming this son to be *verbum patris*, the word of God the Father. Which the foresaid Jonathan in his Chaldee paraphrase does express in many translations, as for example : where Isaiah says, *Isa.* xlv.

*The fifth
proof
Christ the
word incar-
nate.*

‘Israel is saved in Jehovah with an eternal salvation,’ which Jehovah signifies Christ, as all men confess, Jonathan turns it thus :* ‘Israel shall be saved by God’s word.’ So again, where God says by Hosea, *Hosea* xi. ‘I will save the house ‘of Judah by Jehovah their God,’ which is by Christ ; Jonathan translates it thus : ‘I will save Judah by the word of their God.’ In like manner where David writes, *Psal.* cx. ‘Jehovah said to my Lord, sit at my right hand.’ &c. Jonathan expresses it thus, ‘Jehovah said unto his word, sit at my ‘right hand.’ So Rabbi Isaac Arama† writing upon Genesis, expounds this verse of the Psalm, *Psal.* cvi. 20. ‘He sent ‘his word and healed them,’ &c. to be meant of Messias, that shall be God’s word. And Rabbi Simeon‡ the chief of all the Cabalists, upon these words of Job, *Job* xix. 26. ‘I shall see ‘God in my flesh,’ gathers, that the word of God shall take flesh in a woman’s womb. So that this doctrine was nothing strange among the ancient Rabbins.

For further confirmation whereof, seeing the matter is of so great importance, consider what is recorded in a treatise called Zoar, of high authority among the Jews, where Rabbi Simeon§, that was last before alleged, cites a place out of old Rabbi Ibba, upon these words in Deuteronomy, *Deut.* vi. 4. ‘Jehovah our Lord is one Jehovah.’ Which words the said ancient Rabbi Ibba interprets thus : by the first Jehovah in this sentence, being the incommunicable name of God, is signified says he, God the Father, prince of all things. By the next words our Lord, is signified God the Son, that is fountain of all sciences. And by the second Jehovah in the same sentence is signified, God the Holy Ghost, proceeding of them both. To all which is there added the word one, to signify, that these three are indivisi-

*The blessed
Trinity
proved by
an ancient
Rabbin:*

* In the Chaldee paraphrase. † Rab. Isaac com. in c. 47. Gen. ‡ Rab. Simeon Ben. Johai. com. in c. 10. Gen. § Rab. Simeon in Zoar.

ble. But this secret shall not be revealed until the coming of the Messias. Hitherto are the words of Rabbi Ibba reported in Zoar by Rabbi Simeon. Where also the said Rabbi Simeon interprets these words of Isaiah, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth, in this manner. Isaiah by repeating three times Holy, says he, 'does as much as if he had said, 'Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Spirit; which three Holies, do make but one only Lord God of Sabaoth.'

The sixth proof. Finally, I will conclude this controversy between the later Jews and us, with the authority of learned Philo,* who lived in the very same time with Christ, and was sent ambassador twice to Rome, in the behalf of his nation in Alexandria: that is, first in the fifteenth year of Tiberius the emperor, which was three years before Christ's passion, and the very same year wherein he was baptized by St. John, and the second time about eight years after, to wit, in the first of the reign of Caligula. This man, that was the most learned, that ever wrote among the Jews, after the writers of holy scripture deceased, made a special book of the banishment of his countrymen, where he has this discourse ensuing:

'What time may he appointed,' says he,† 'for the return home of us banished Jews, it is hard to determine. For by tradition we have, that we must expect the death of a high-priest: but of those, some die quickly, and some live longer. But I am of opinion, that this high-priest will be the very word of God; which will be void of all sin, both voluntary and involuntary; whose father shall be God, and this word shall be that Father's wisdom, by which all things in the world were created. His head shall be anointed with oil, and his kingdom shall shine and flourish for ever.' This wrote Philo at that time, when he little imagined, that the same high-priest, whom he so much expected, and the same word of God, whose kingdom he describes, was now already come into the world. And this shall suffice for our second consideration, what manner of Messias the Jews did expect.

The third consideration whether Christ should change the law of Moses. Now in the third place, it is to be considered, what authority and power the Messias should have at his appearance upon earth; and whether he should change or abrogate the law of Moses or no; wherein there is no less controversy between us and the later Jews, than in the former point of his divinity. For we hold with St. Paul, *Gal.* iii. and iv.

* Philo l. 2. legat. Ruff. l. 1. his. c. 6. Eus. in chron. † Philo l. De. Exulibus

that the law of Moses was given unto the Jews but for a time, to entertain that people withal, *Heb. vii.* and by the outward signs and ceremonies which it had, whereof the most part, or all, prefigured Christ to come to be their schoolmaster and leader to the times of faith, *1 Cor. x.* wherein it should be abrogated, and a far more perfect law set down by Christ in place thereof.

This we prove first, for the law of Moses was an *The law of imperfect law, bringing nothing to perfection, as St. Moses im-* Paul well notes, *Heb. vii.* It was as St. Peter says, *perfect. Acts xv.* a burdensome law, which the Jews themselves were not able to bear, for the multitude of ceremonies therein contained. It was a carnal and servile law, consisting more in the external, *Gal. iii.* It was a law of terror and fear, more than of love and liberty of spirit. It was a law, as I said before, of signs and figures for things to come; *Deut. xv.* and consequently to cease when those things which it prefigured, should come to be present. It was a law peculiar and proper to the Jews alone,* without regard to all the rest of the world; and the exercise thereof was allowed only in the country of Jewry; and that which is more, it was not permitted, but in one place only of that country, that is, in Jerusalem, whither every man was bound to repair three times a year; to wit, at the Pasque, at the Pentecost, and at the feast of Tabernacles; and in that place alone to make their sacrifices, and in no other country or place besides.

Now then, reasons the learned divine; if this law *Good* of Moses were for the Jews and Jewry only, how *reasons.* could it serve for the time of the Messias, who was to be king, as well of the Gentiles as of the Jews; and to rule all people in the world, that should believe in him under one law?† If the exercise of this law were allowable only, and lawful in Jerusalem, how could it possibly be fulfilled by Christians, that are dispersed over all the world? as for example, how could they repair to Jerusalem thrice every year? how could every woman that should dwell in England or India, repair to Jerusalem for her purification after every childbirth, as by the law‡ she was commanded? most evident it is then, which we said before, that this law was given but to endure for a time. And to use St. Paul's own words, it was but *Heb. vii. Introductio melioris spei*, an introduction to a

* *Deut. 13 and 14. Lev. 5 and 23. Ex. 23. Deut. 27.* † *Psalm 2, 21. 26. Isaiah 2, 11, 19.* ‡ *Lev. 12. Exod. 13. Numb. 8.*

better hope. It was but an entertainment of that people, which by their being among the Egyptians were prone to idolatry, until Christ should come and ordain a perfect law, that is, a law of spirit and internal affection : a law of love and liberty ; a law that should be common to all men ;

The new law of Christ and the perfections thereof. serve for all countries, times, places, and persons ; a law that should be written in the bowels of our hearts ; a law that should be tolerably easy, sweet, plain, light, brief, and factible, as well to the poor, as to the rich ; a law, to conclude, that should consist in charity.

This signified Moses, when he said to his people, after he had delivered the former law unto them : *Deut. xviii.* ‘ A prophet of thy nation, and of thy brethren like unto me, will the Lord thy God rise up to thee : him shalt thou hear.’ As though he said : you shall hear me but until he come, that must be a law-giver as myself ; but yet of a more perfect law ; and therefore more to be heard and obeyed. And then he addeth, ‘ He that will not hear his words, which he shall speak in my name, I will be the revenger.’ Which words cannot be verified in any other prophet after Moses until Christ ; for of those prophets the scripture saith, *Deut. xxxiv.* ‘ There arose no prophet like unto Moses in Israel.’ Which is to be understood, that they had no authority to be law-makers as Moses had ; but were all bound to the observation of that law only, which Moses left until Christ came, whom Moses here calls *a prophet as himself* ; that is, a law-maker, and exhorts all men to hear and obey him. This yet is made more plain by the prophecy of Isaiah, who saith, *Isa. ii.* ‘ Out of Sion shall come a law, and the word of God out of Jerusalem.’ Which cannot be understood of Moses’ law, that had been published eight hundred years before this was spoken ; and that from the mount Sinai, and not from Sion : but Christ’s law began from Sion and Jerusalem, and from thence was spread into all the world. Which the same Isaiah foresaw, when talking of the Messias he says, *Isa. xix.* ‘ In that day there shall be an altar of the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a monument of the Lord at the borders thereof, &c. And the Lord shall be known by Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day : and shall worship him with sacrifices and offerings.’ Which words could not be verified in the old law of Moses ; for by that law the Egyptians could have neither altar nor sacrifice : but at Christ’s coming it was fulfilled, when the Egyptians

were made Christians, and enjoyed both the altars and sacrifices, that Christians do use.

The same thing was foretold by God in Malachi, where he says to the Jews, and of the Jewish sacrifices, *Mal. i.* ‘I have ‘no pleasure in you: and I will not receive a gift of your ‘hand. For from the rising of the sun, even to the going ‘down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every ‘place there is sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean ‘oblation,—saith the Lord of Hosts.’ In which words, we see first a reprobation of the Jewish sacrifice; and consequently of the law of Moses, which depended principally on that sacrifice. Secondly, we see, that among the Gentiles, there should be a pure manner of sacrifice, more grateful unto God than the other was, and such as might be performed in every place of the world, and not to be tied to one place only, as the Mosaical law and sacrifice was.

The reprobation of the old law with a promise of a new.

And finally, I will conclude this whole matter with the express words of God himself, concerning the ceremonies and precepts of the old law, *Ezek. xx.* *Dedi eis præcepta non bona, et judicia in quibus non vivent.* ‘Therefore I also gave ‘them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which ‘they shall not live.’ That is, they were not good to continue perpetually, nor shall they live in them for ever, but until the time by me appointed; of which time, he determines more particularly by Jeremiah the prophet, in these words: *Jer. xxxi.* ‘Behold the days shall come, and I will make a ‘new covenant or testament with the house of Is- ‘rael and with the house of Juda: not according ‘to the covenant which I made with their fathers, ‘when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.’ Where you see that at the coming of Christ into this world (for of him and his birth, he talks at large in all this chapter) there shall be a new testament, containing a different law from that of the old testament, which was given to the Jews, at their going forth of Egypt.

A new testament promised.

Thus much then hath hitherto been showed, that Christ in all ages was foretold and promised; that he should be God, and that his authority should be to change the law of Moses, that was given but for a time, and to establish a new law and covenant, and a new testament of his own, that should endure and continue for ever.

The sum of that which has been said.

And although these things be very wonderful and sufficient

The fourth to establish any man's belief in the world when
considera- he shall see them fulfilled, which shall be the ar-
tion All gument of my second section; yet rests not the
particulars scripture here, but passes further, and foretels
foretold of *Christ.* every particular act, accident, and circumstance
of importance, that should fall out about the Messiah in his
coming, incarnation, birth, life, death and resurrection. As for
example, *Mat.* i. 16. at what particular time and season he
should appear, *Gen.* xlix. 10. *Dan.* ix. 26. *Luke* ii. 21. That
he should be born of a virgin, *Isa.* vii. 14. *Mat.* ii. 16. That
the place of his birth should be the town of Bethlehem,
Micha v. 1. *Mat.* ii. That at his birth all the infants round
about should be slain for his sake, *Jer.* xxxi. 15. That the
kings of the east should come and adore him, and offer gold
and other gifts unto him, *Psal.* lxxi. 10. *Luke* ii. That he
should be presented by his mother in the temple of Jerusalem,
Malachi iii. 1. *Mat.* v. That he should flee into Egypt, and
be recalled thence again, *Hosea* xi. 2. *Isa.* xix. 1. That John
the Baptist, should go before him, and cry in the desert, *Isa.*
xl. 3. *Malachi* iii. 1.

After this, that he should begin his own preaching with all
humility, quietness, and clemency of spirit, *Isa.* lxii. 2. *Mat.*
iv. and viii. That he should do strange miracles, and heal all
diseases, *Isa.* xxix. 8. and xxxv. 5. and xli. 1. *Mark* viii. That
he should die for the sins of all the world, *Isa.* liii. *Dan.* xxvi.
Mark xiv. That he should be betrayed by his own disciples,
Psal. xl. 10. and liv. 14. and cviii. 8. *Mat.* xxvi. That he
should be sold for thirty pieces of silver, *Zac.* xi. 12. *Mat.*
xxvii. That with those thirty pieces there should be bought
afterwards a Potters' field, *Jer.* xxx. *Mat.* xxi. 7. That he
should ride into Jerusalem upon an ass before his passion,
Zac. ix. 9. *Matt.* xxvi. That the Jews should beat and buffet
his face, and defile the same with spitting upon him, *Isa.* l. 6.
Luke xxii. That they should whip, and tear, and rend his
body before they put him to death, *Isa.* liii. 2. *Psal'm* xxxvii.
18. *Matt.* xxvii. That they should put him to death among
thieves and malefactors, *Isa.* lii. 12. That they should give
him vinegar to drink, divide his apparel, and cast lots
for his upper garment, *Psal'm* lxviii. 22. xxi. 19. *Matt.*
xxviii. That he should rise again from death the third day,
Psal'm xv. 19. *Hosea* vi. 3. *Luke* xxiv. That he should
ascend to heaven, *Acts* vii. and sit at the right hand of God
his father for ever, *Psal'm* lxvii. 19.

All these particulars, and a number more were revealed to

the patriarchs and prophets, touching the coming of the Messias, some nigh two thousand, and the last of all above four hundred years before Christ was born. Which if we lay together, and consider withal, how exactly they were fulfilled afterwards in the person of Jesus, as in the next section shall be declared : if we add also to this, that we have received these prophecies and predictions from a nation, that most of all others does hate us ; and that the same are to be seen and read in their bibles, even word for word as they are in ours ; if you hold in memory also, what invincible proofs were alleged before in this second chapter, for the infallible truth and certainty of those Hebrew scriptures ; you shall find that hardly any thing can be imagined for manifestation of a truth before it came to pass, which God hath not observed in foreshowing the Messias.

And all these considerations are touching the Jews. There remains somewhat to be said of the Gentiles, who though they were to receive their principal knowledge in this affair from the Jewish nation, to whom the Messias was first and principally promised, and from whom the Gentiles had to expect both their Saviour and his Apostles, as also the scriptures for testimony and witness of them both ; and finally all their certain knowledge and sound understanding, in the mysteries of Christ : yet had they also among themselves some kind of notice and forewarning in this matter, which being joined with that, which I have set down before of the Jews, and examined at the light of God's divine prophecies before alleged : it will make very much for confirmation of our christian verity. And therefore this last consideration shall be, of the foreknowledge of Gentiles in this behalf.

For better understanding whereof it is to be noted, that besides all knowledge of the Messias, that divers Gentiles might have by the Hebrew scriptures, which, as I have showed before, chap. ii. were in the Greek language divers ages before Christ was born ; or by the instruction or conversation of the Jews, with whom many Pagans did live familiarly ; there remained three ways peculiar to Gentiles, whereby they received some understanding and forewarning of this great mystery. The first was, by tradition and writing of their ancestors. The second, by prophecies of their own. The third, by admonishment of their idols and oracles, especially when the time of Christ's appearance drew near.

*The fifth
consideration.
Manifestation of
Christ
to the
Gentiles.*

*Three peculiar ways
whereby
Gentiles
might hear
of Christ*

The first way. And for the first way it is evident, that as the Jews received divers things by succession from their forefathers; and they again from Moses; and Moses from the patriarchs, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, who was the first man, from whom that whole nation proceeded, and in whom they were distinguished from all other people in the world, so had the Gentiles, and other nations, their succession also of doctrine and monuments, even from the beginning; although the lower they went the more corrupt they were, and more obscured in divine knowledge, by their exercise in idolatry. So we know that the Romans had their learning from the Grecians; and the Grecians from the Egyptians, the Egyptians from the Chaldeans, who were the first people that received instruction in divine matters from Adam, Mathusala, Noah, and others of those first and ancient fathers.

Now then it is to be considered, that by consent of writers,* there were three famous men that lived together in those ancient times, to wit, Abraham, who descended from Heber, was the father and beginner of the Jews or Hebrews, and with him Job, and one Zoroastres, that were not of that lineage of Heber, but as we call them for distinction sake, either Heathens or Gentiles, although that difference was not then in use. And of Job, we know by the testimony of his book that he was a most holy and virtuous man. Of Zoroastres, we only know that he was greatly learned, and left monuments thereof unto his posterity.

This Zoroastres living in Abraham's time, might by account of scripture, see or speak with Noah. For that Abraham was born above three score years before Noah deceased. And Noah was born above five hundred years before Mathusala died, which Mathusala had lived two hundred and forty years with our first father Adam, that had enjoyed conversation both with God and angels. And thereby no doubt, could tell many high and secret mysteries, especially touching Christ, in whom all his hope of the redemption of his posterity did consist, which mysteries and hidden knowledge, it is not unlike but that Abraham, Job, Zoroastres and others, who had lived at that time with them, might receive at the third hand, by Noah and his children, I mean Shem,† Cham, and Japheth, who had

* Euseb. in Chron. † The Jews have tradition that Abraham served Shem fifteen years in Chaldea.

lived before the flood, and had seen Mathusala ; which Mathusala lived, as is said, so many years with Adam.

Hence it is, that in the writings of Zoroastres, which are yet extant,* or recorded by other authors in his name, there are found very many plain speeches of the Son of God, whom he calleth, *secundam mentem*, the second mind. And much more is to be seen in the writings of Hermes Trismegistus,† who lived after in Egypt, and received his learning from this Zoroastres, that these first heathen philosophers had manifest understanding of this second person in trinity, whom Hermes calls, ‘The first begotten Son of God : his only Son, his ‘dear, eternal, immutable and incorruptible Son, whose sacred name is ineffable,’ those are his words. And after him again among the Grecians, were Orpheus, Hesiodus, and others, that uttered the like speeches of the Son of God ; as also did the Platonists, whose words and sentences are too long to repeat in this place. But he that will see them gathered together at large, let him read either Origen against Celsus the Heathen ; or else St. Cyril, in his first book against Julian the Apostate. And this shall suffice for the first way, whereby the Gentiles had understanding of Christ.

For the second thing which I mentioned, it is to be understood, that among the Gentiles there were certain prophetesses, or women prophets, called Sibyllæ, which, as Lactantius‡ gathers may signify so much in the Greek, as either *counsellors to God*, or *revealers of God’s councils*. And these women being indued, as it seems, with a certain spirit of prophecy, did utter from time to time, though in such terms as most Gentiles understood them not, most wonderful particulars of Christ to come, agreeing, as it were, wholly with the prophets of Israel ; or rather setting down many things in much more plain and evident speech, than did the others ; the one of them beginning her Greek metre in these very words, ‘Know thy God, which is the Son of God,’ &c. Another of them makes a whole discourse of Christ in Greek verses called Acrostichi,§ for at the beginning of every verse, is by some letter appointed in order, out of some one sentence that runs through the whole. As for example, the sentence that passed through the beginning of those verses which now

The prophecies touching Christ among the Gentiles.

Of the Sibyls.

* See Clem. Alex. lib. 2. Strom. and Orig. 1. 6. con. Celf. and Procl. 1. 2. and 2. in Parm. Platonis. † Trismegist. Meren. Her. in Præman. c. 1. and deinceps. ‡ Lact. lib. 1. div. Inst. c. 6. § Lact. lib. 4. Institut. c. 6.

we talk of was this,* ‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, cross.’ And there were so many verses in the whole discourse, as there are letters in this sentence. The total argument being the incarnation, life, death, glory, and judgment of the Son of God. And the last two verses of all the metre are these: ‘He that hath been described by our Acrostick verses, is an immortal Saviour, and a King that must suffer for our sins.’

The Greek verses of the Sibyls, of what importance and authority. And as these very prophecies of the Sibyls are of marvellous importance, to confirm the verity of our christian religion; and are alleged often for that purpose by the most grave and learned fathers of our primitive church: as for example, by Justinus the martyr, in his apology for christians: by Origen against Celsus: by Arnobius and his scholar Lactantius, against Gentiles: by St. Cyril against Julian the Apostate; by St. Augustine in his city of God; by Eusebius and Constantine the emperor and others: I will say something in this place, for the authority and credit of these things, lest any man perhaps might imagine as some Gentiles in late times would seem to do, that they were devised or invented by christians. And the most of my proofs shall be out of a learned† oration, written in Latin by the aforesaid emperor, to a council of prelates in his days, wherein he endeavours to show the undoubted authority of these Sibyls’ prophecies, which he esteemed so much, after diligent search made for their credit and sincerity, as they seem to have been a great cause of his constant zeal and fervor in christianity.

The first proof for credit of the Sibyls’ verses. First then he shows, that these predictions of the Sibyls could not be devised or feigned by christians, or made after the time of Christ’s nativity; for Marcus Varro,‡ a most learned Roman, who lived almost a hundred years before Christ makes mention at large of these Sibyls, who in number, he says, were ten; and of their writings, countries, and ages, as also of the writers or authors, that before his time had left memory of them. And both he, and Fenestella,§ another heathen do affirm, that the writings of these Sibyls, were gathered by the Romans from all parts of the world, where they might be heard of, and laid up with diligence, and great reverence in the capitol,

* St. Augustine translates all the verses, 1. 18. de civ. Dei. c. 23.

† See this oration in Euseb. 1. 4. c. 32. de vita Constantine at the end.

‡ Var. lib. de reb. div. ad Cæsarum pont. max. § Fenest. ca. de 15. viris.

under the charge and custody of the high-priests and other officers, in such sort, as no man might see or read them, but only certain magistrates called the *fifteen*, and much less might any man come to falsify or corrupt them.

Secondly, he shows, that Sibylla Erythræa, who *The second proof.* made the former acrostic verses of Christ, testifies of herself, that she lived about six hundred years after the flood of Noah ; and her countryman, Apollodorus Erythræus, and Varro do report, that she lived before the war of Troy, and prophesied to the Grecians, that went to that war, that Troy should be taken, which was more than a thousand years before Christ was born. Cicero also,* that was slain more than forty years before Christ's nativity, translated into Latin the former† acrostic verses, as Constantine says, which translation was to be seen in his work, when Constantine wrote this oration ; so that by no means they could be devised or brought in by christians.

Thirdly, he shows that the same Cicero in divers *The third proof.* places of his works, besides the mention of these acrostic verses, insinuates also another prophecy of Sibylla touching a king that should rise over all the world, where-with himself and the Romans were greatly troubled ; and therefore in one place, after a long invective against his enemy Anthony, that would seem to give credit to that prophecy, or rather, as Cicero‡ doth urge against him, would have had the same fulfilled in Julius Cæsar, he concludes thus, ‘ Let us deal with the prelates of our religion, to allege rather any one thing out of the books of Sibylla, than a king whom neither the gods, nor yet men, can suffer to be in Rome.’

The like prophecy of Sibylla touching a king, is insinuated by the same Cicero§ in his first book of Epistles to Lentulus, to wit,|| that when the Romans should restore a king in Egypt by force, then should ensure a universal king that should be lord over Romans and all others. Which prophecy, being much urged by Cato the tribune, *Epist.* 5, against the restoring of Ptolomæus Aulete,** late king of Egypt, that for his evil government was expelled by his subjects ; the matter was judged to be of such weight by all the Roman senate, I mean the sequel of this prophecy, that whereas otherwise for many respects, they were greatly inclined to have restored the

* Lact. l. 1. instit. c. 6. Cicero. † See Cicero of these acrostic verses of Sibylla, l. 2. de divinatione. ‡ Cicero l. 2. de divin. paulo post medium. § Cic. l. 2. fam. ep. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. || See lib. 2. oraculorum Sibyl. ** He was father to Cleopatra.

said Ptolomy ; yet in regard of this religion, as they called it, they changed their minds. But what ! could they alter by this the determination of God ? No truly ; for soon after king Ptolomy perceiving the senators' minds to be altered, fled secretly from Rome to one Gabinus,* that was governor of Syria, and for five millions of gold that he promised him, he was by the forces of Gabinus restored ; and so, not long after was Christ born, according to the meaning of the Sibyls' prophecy.

The fourth proof. Fourthly, the said emperor Constantine proves the authority of the Sibyls' verses, for that Augustus Cæsar, before Christ was born, had such regard to them, that he laid them in more strait order than before, (as Suetonius,† a heathen, in his life, reports) under the altar of Apollo, in the hill Palatine, where no man might have the sight of them but by special licence ; which licence Constantine proveth, that Virgil the poet had, for that he was in high favour with Augustus. And therefore in a certain

The prophecies of Sibylla alleged by Virgil. eclogue or composition of verses that he made in praise of a young child named Salonius, newly born to Asinius Pollio, Augustus' great friend, or, as others take it, of Marcellus, a little boy, that was nephew to Augustus by his sister Octavia, or rather of them both, for adulation of Augustus : he applies, I say, to one or both of these young infants, the whole prophecy which he had read in these verses of Sibylla, touching the birth of Christ, and of the peace, grace, and golden world that should come with him ; upon which subject he begins thus :

Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas,
Magnus ab integro sæculorum nascitur ordo,
Jam redit et virgo ; redeunt Saturnia regna.†

Christ's preordination. That is, now is come the last age prophecied by Sibylla, called Cumæa ; now comes to be fulfilled the great ordinance and providence of God appointed from the beginning of the world ; (these were Sibyls' words) now comes the virgin, and the first golden days of Saturnus shall return again.

Thus much translated Virgil out of Sibylla, touching the eternal determination of God, for Christ's coming into this world ; as also of his mother the Virgin, and of the infinite blessings that should appear with him. Now ensues in the

* Dion. l. 39. h. † Suet. tranq. c. 3. de vita Augusti. † Virg. eclog. 4.

same poet, what Sibylla had said, for Christ's actual nativity:

Jam nova progenies cœlo dimittitur alto,
Chara Deum soboles, &c.

Now a new progeny or offspring is sent down from heaven, the dearly beloved issue or child of the Gods. And note here, Sibylla said plainly, *Chara dei soboles*, the dearly beloved Son of God, and not of gods; but Virgil would follow the style of his time. And thirdly, he sets down out of Sibylla, the effect and cause of the Son of God's nativity in these words:

Te duce, si qua manent, sceleris vestigia nostri,
Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.

That is, thou being our leader or captain, the remnant of our sins shall be made void, or taken away, and shall deliver the world for ever from fear for the same; these are Virgil's words translated, as I said, out of Sibylla. And now consider you in reason whether these prophecies might be applied, as Virgil applied them, to those poor children in Rome, or no, who died soon after this flattery of Virgil, without doing good either to themselves or others? although perhaps in this point, the poet is to be excused in that, he being not able to imagine what the Sibyl should mean, made his advantage thereof, in applying the same to please Augustus.

These then are the proofs which Constantine uses for the credit and authority of the Sibyls' verses. And of Sibylla Erythræa in particular that made the acrostic verses before mentioned, of Christ's death and passion, he concluded in these words* *Constantine's opinion of the spirit of Sibylla Erythræa.* 'These are the things which fell from heaven into the mind of this virgin to foretel. For which cause, I am induced to account her blessed, whom our Saviour did vouchsafe to choose for a prophetess to announce unto the world his holy providence towards us.' And we may consider in this whole discourse of Constantine, for authority of these verses: First, that he uses only the testimony of such writers as lived before Christ was born or christians thought upon. Secondly, he uses these proofs to no meaner audience than to a council and congregation of learned men. Thirdly, he was an emperor who uses them; that is, one that had means to see, and examine the original copies in the Roman treasury. Fourthly,

* Orat. ad. cœtum. Sanct. c. 18.

the emperor began to iterate his sacrifice again, and to be instant for an answer ; Apollo, as it were forced, uttered these strange words unto him : ‘ An Hebrew child, that rules over the blessed gods, commands me to leave this habitation and out of hand to get me to hell : but yet do you depart in silence from our altars.’ Thus much was Apollo enforced to utter his own misery, and of the coming of the Hebrew boy, that should put him to banishment. But yet the deceitful spirit, to hold still his credit, would not have the matter revealed to many ; whereupon, Augustus falling into a great musing with himself, what this answer might import ; returned to Rome, and built there an altar in the capitol, with this Latin inscription, as Nicephorus* affirms : *Ara Primogeniti Dei.* ‘ The altar of God’s first begotten Son.’

Thus then have I declared, how the coming of God’s Son into the world was foretold both to Jew and Gentile, by all means that possibly in reason might be devised ; that is by prophecies, signs, figures, ceremonies, tradition, and by the confession of devils themselves. Not only his coming was foretold, but also why, and for what cause he was to come ; that is, to be a Saviour of the world, to die for sin, to ordain a new law, and more perfect commonwealth. How also he was to come : to wit, in man’s flesh, in likeness of sin, in poverty and humility. The time likewise of his appearance was foresignified, together with the manner of his birth, life, actions, death, resurrection, and ascension. And finally, nothing can be more desired for the foreknowledge of any thing to come, than was delivered and uttered concerning the Messias, before Christ, or Christians were talked of in the world. Now *The conclusion of this first section.* then remains it to consider and examine, whether *The argument of the two sections following.* these particulars, foretold so long ago of the Messias to come, do agree in Jesus, whom we acknowledge for the true Messias. And this shall be the subject and argument of all the rest of our speech in this chapter.

SECT. III.—*How the former predictions were fulfilled in Jesus being upon earth.*

ALTHOUGH in the points before recited, which were to be fulfilled in the Messias at his coming, we have some controversy and disagreement with the Jew, as hath been showed :

* Niceph. l. c. hist. c. 17.

yet our principal contention in them all, is with the Gentile and Heathen, that believe no scriptures. For in diversity with vers of the forenamed articles, the Jew stands with Gentiles. us, and for us, and offers his life in defence thereof, as much as if he were a Christian ; so that the Gentile oftentimes is forced to marvel, when he sees a people so extremely bent against another as the Jews are against Christians ; and yet to stand so peremptorily in defence of those very principles, which are the proper causes of their disagreement.

But here the Jew makes answer, that his disagreement from us, is in the application of those principles. For in no wise will he allow, that they were or may be verified in Jesus. And herein he stands against us much more obstinately, than does the Gentile. For the Gentile, as soon as he comes once to understand and believe the prophecies of scripture, makes no doubt or difficulty in the application thereof ; for he sees the same most evidently fulfilled in our Saviour. Which is the cause, that few or no Gentiles, since Christ's appearance, have come to be Jews, but presently also they passed over to be Christians.

The obstinacy of the Jews. But the Jew by no means will be moved to yield, though he has neither scripture, nor reason, nor probability for his defence : which among other things is a very great argument to prove, that Jesus was the true Messias indeed ; seeing that among the marks of the true Messias set down by God's prophets, this was one ; that he should be refused by the Jewish nation. Hence are those words of the Holy Ghost, so long before uttered : *Psalm cxviii.* 'The stone, which the builders* refused, is made the headstone of the corner ; this is done by God, and is marvellous in our eyes.' Hence is that great complaint of Isaiah, *Isa. xxviii.* touching the incredulity and obstinacy of his people against their Messias at his coming ; which Moses also, long before Isaiah, expressed most effectually.

The Jew's obstinacy against us, a great argument for us. It makes then not a little for our cause, gentle reader, that the Jewish nation is so wilfully bent against us ; and that they refused Christ peremptorily, at his being among them. For whomsoever that nation shall receive and acknowledge, it were a great argument by scripture, that he were not indeed the true Messias. But yet to demonstrate to the world, how little

* The builders are the Jews who take upon them to build God's house. Matt. xxi. Isa. vi. Deut. xxviii.

show of reason they have in standing thus against their own salvation, and refusing Jesus as they do : I will in as great brevity as I may, run over the chief points, that passed at his being upon earth ; and thereby examine by the testimonies of his greatest enemies, whether the foresaid prophecies, and all other signs, which have been from the beginning, to foretel unto us the true Messias, were fulfilled in him and his actions, or no.

And as the matters are many and divers, that will come to be handled, I will for order sake, reduce all to four considerations ; whereof the first shall be touching the time foreprophecied of the coming of Messias ; and whether the same agreed with Christ's nativity or no. The second shall be of divers particulars, that passed in Christ's incarnation, birth, circumcision, and other accidents, until the time that he began to preach. The third shall be of his life, conversation, miracles, and doctrine. The fourth and last, of his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. In all which, as I said before, I will use no one author or testimony of our side, for proving any thing that is in controversy between us ; but all shall pass by trial, either of their own scriptures, or of manifest force and consequence of reason ; or else by expressed record of our professed enemies.

The division of this section into four considerations.

The testimonies here used.

For the first then, concerning the time which is the principal and head of all the rest, it is to be noted, that by consent of all writers, both Pagan, Jewish, and Christian, Jesus, whom we believe and confess to be true Christ, was born the twenty-fifth day of December, in the end of the one and fortieth year of Augustus's reign ; which was fifteen years before his reign ended. Also in the beginning of the three and thirtieth year of Herod's reign in Jewry ; which was four years and more before his death. And from the beginning of the world, as* some account, five thousand one hundred and ninety-nine : and as others, four thousand and eighty-nine. For in this point between the Hebrews and Grecians, there is a considerable difference concerning their reckoning.

The first consideration. The time appointed.

The state of the world at Jesus' nativity was this : the three monarchies of the Assyrians, Persians, and Grecians, were past over and ended : and the Romans were entered into the fourth that was greater than any of the rest, according to the

* See Euseb. in Chron.

The general state of the world at Christ's coming.

prophecy of Daniel, five hundred years before Octavius Cæsar, surnamed Augustus ; who* after five civil wars by himself waged, and after infinite broils and bloodshed in the world, reigned peaceably alone for many years together ; and in token of a universal peace over all the earth, he caused the temple gates of *Janus* to be shut, according to the custom of the Romans in such cases ; although this had happened but twice before, from the building of Rome unto that time. And the very same day that Christ was born in Jewry, Augustus commanded in Rome,† as afterwards was observed, that no man should call him Lord, thereby to signify the free liberty, rest, joy, and security, wherein all men were after so long miseries, which by continual wars the world had suffered.

The first proof. The Roman monarchy.

By this we gather first, that this time of Jesus' birth agreed exactly with the prophecy so long before set down in Daniel, *Dan.* ii. 31, 34, 44, who lived in the first monarchy, that after his time, there should be three monarchies more, and the last biggest of all ; at whose appearing the Messias should come, and build up God's kingdom throughout the world.

The second proof. The peace of all the world.

Secondly, we see that fulfilled, which Isaiah, above a hundred years before Daniel foretold : that at the coming of Christ, *Isaiah* ix. 6, 7. ' People ' should sit in the beauty of peace.' And again : ' There shall be no end of peace.' And yet further : *ch.* xxxii. 18. ' He shall be Prince of peace.' And king David long before him again : *Psal.* lxxi. ' In his days there ' shall rise justice, and abundance of peace.' Which thing, though especially to be understood of the internal peace and tranquility of our minds and souls : yet, considering that external peace also was necessary for a time, for the quiet planting and publishing of Christ's gospel ; and seeing the same brought to pass most miraculously upon the sudden, when, in reason, men might least expect the same, for the infinite wars wherein the world a little before had been ; and by reason of the Roman monarchy so freshly established : which in their beginnings are wont to be troublesome : this peace, I say, cannot but be a great argument that this was the proper time of the Messias' coming : and this for the state of the world in general.

* Sueton. Tran. et Autel. viet. et al. in vita Aug. † Oros. l. 7. hist. c. 22.

But now for the particular state of Jewry, at Jesus' nativity; thus it was according to Josephus the Jew, (who was born within five years after Christ's passion) describes it. One Herod a stranger (whose father, called Antipater,* came out of Idumæa) was risen to acquaintance and favour with the Romans, partly by his said father's means, who was, as Josephus' words are, *a well monied man, industrious and fuctionous*: and partly also by his own diligence and ambition, being of himself both witty, beautiful, and of excellent rare qualities. By which commendations he came at length to marry the daughter of Hyrcanus, king of Jewry, that was descended lineally of the house of David, and the tribe of Juda. And by this marriage obtained of his father-in-law, to be governor of the province of Galilee, under him. But Hyrcanus, afterwards falling into the hands of the Parthians, that carried him into Parthia, Herod ran away to Rome, and there, by the help and special favour of Anthony, that ruled in company together with Octavius, he obtained to be created king of Jewry, without all title or interest in the world. For not only his said father-in-law, Hyrcanus was yet alive in Parthia, but also his younger brother, Aristobulus, and three of his sons, named Antigonus, Alexander, and Aristobulus; and divers others of the blood royal in Jewry. Herod then having procured by these means to be king of Jewry,† procured first to have in his hands the foresaid king Hyrcanus; and so put him to death: as also he brought to the same end his younger brother Aristobulus, together with his three sons. He put to death also his own wife Marianne,‡ that was king Hyrcanus' daughter, as also Alexandria her mother; and soon after, two of his own sons by the said Marianne, because they were of the blood royal of Juda. And a little after that again, he put to death his third son named Antipater. He caused to be slain at one time, forty of the chiefest nobleman of the tribe of Juda. And as Philo the Jew writes, that lived at the same time with him, he put to death all the Sanhedrim, that is, the seventy-two senators of the tribe of Juda, that ruled the people. He killed the chief of

*The third
proof.
The sceptre
of Juda.*

*The first
rising of
Herod As-
calonita.*

*The most
horrible
murders
committed
by Herod.*

* His grandfather was a sexton in Apollo's temple, and his father was brought up among thieves in Idumæa. * Euseb. l. 1. cap. 6. ex Africano, Joseph. l. 14. antiq. c. 2. † Joseph. 15. l. ant. c. 9. 11. ‡ Joseph. l. 17, c. 10. lib. 15, c. 1. Philo lib. de tempore.

the sect of Pharisees; he burned the genealogies of all the kings and princes of the house of Juda;* and caused one Nicholas Damaseenus, an historiographer, that was his servant, to draw out a pedigree for him and his line, as though he had descended from the ancient kings of Juda. He translated the high priesthood, and sold it to strangers. *Pattern of an ambitious tyrant.* And finally he so razed, dispersed, and mangled the house of Juda, as nothing of government, dignity, or principality remained. And when he had done all this, then was Jesus of the same house and line born in Bethlehem, the proper city of David, which David was the first founder and first author of regality in the tribe of Juda.

The prophecy of Jacob touching the sceptre of Juda. Now then, consider the prophecy of Jacob, concerning the particular time of Christ's appearance, almost two thousand years before these things fell out. *Gen. xlix* 'Come hither, my children,' says he, 'that I may tell you the things which are to happen in the latter days, &c. The sceptre shall not be taken from Juda, until he come who is to be sent; and he shall be the expectation of nations.' Which prophecy, that it was fulfilled now at Christ's nativity, when Herod had extinguished all government in Juda, no man can deny, that will acknowledge the things set down before, which are recorded by writers both of that time, and of the Jewish nation and religion. And that it never was fulfilled from David's days, who began the government in the house of Juda, until this time, appears plainly by all histories and records, both divine and profane. For *That the sceptre never failed Juda until Herod came.* that from David, *1 Reg. xvi.* who was the first king unto Zedechias, *4 Reg. xxv.* and *Jer. xxxvii.* that was the last, and died in the captivity in Babylon; the scripture shows how all kings descended of the house of Juda. And during the time of the captivity in Babylon, which was seventy years, the Jews were always permitted to choose to themselves a governor of the house of Juda, whom they called *reschgaluta.*† And after their delivery from Babylon, Zorobabel of the same tribe, was their captain;‡ and so others after him, until you come to the Maccabees,§ who were both captain and priests, for that they were by the mother's side of the tribe of Juda, and by the father's side of the tribe of

* Joseph. I. 14. c. 2. † Thal: in tract. Sanh. cap. Dincl. Mammonoth Rab. Moses Egypt præfat. Malmonim. ‡ Esd. I. 1. c. 1, 2, 3. § Mac

Levi, as Rabbi Kimhi* holds. And from these men down to Hyrcanus, and Aristobulus, whom Herod slew, there continued still the same line as Josephus† declares. So by this prophecy it is evident, that Jesus was born at the proper time appointed for the Messiah, when there was neither king, nor counsellor, nor any one governor of the house and tribe of Juda left in Jewry.

Another prophecy there is, no less evident than the former, wherein it is affirmed, that the Messiah shall come before the second temple of Jerusalem (that was built by Zorobabel, after the Jews' return from their captivity in Babylon) should be destroyed by the Romans. For better understanding whereof it is to be noted, that the temple of Jerusalem‡ was built twice, first by Solomon, which lasted about four hundred and forty-two years; and then it was burned and destroyed by Nebuchodonosor, king of Babylon. Wherefore about seventy years after, it was built again by Zorobabel, who§ reduced the Jews from Babylon, and so it continued, until it was destroyed the second time by Titus, son to Vespasian the Roman emperor, about forty years after Christ's ascension. At that time, it had lasted from Zorobabel, almost six hundred years; and from Solomon above a thousand.

And as in the time of the second building the people of Israel were poor, and much afflicted in respect of their late long banishment, though much assisted to this work by the liberality and munificence of Darius, king of Babylon, 1 Esd. v, vi. so was the building and workmanship of this second temple, nothing comparable for excellence to the first building of Solomon, when the Jews were in the flower of their riches. This testifies Aggeus the prophet, who was one of the builders; and he testifies the same to Zorobabel, and the rest of those that were with him, by God's own appointment in these words: Agg. ii. 'The word of the Lord came by the hand of Aggeus the prophet, saying: Speak to Zorobabel the son of Salathiel the governor of Juda, and to Jesus the son of Josedec the high priest, and to the rest of the people, saying: Who is left among you, that saw this house in its first glory (before their transmigration) and how do you see it now? is it not in comparison to that as nothing in

The fourth proof; the destruction of the second temple.

The building of the second temple less sumptuous than the first.

* Rabbi Kimhi. com. in Ag. † Joseph. l. 13 et 14 ant. ‡ 3 Reg. c. vi. & vii. 2 Para. 3 Euseb. in Chron. Clem. l. 1. strom. 4 Reg. 25. § 1 Esd. v. 3, 4.

‘your eyes?’ that is, is it not, as though it were nothing, in comparison to the former temple which Solomon built.

Thus said Aggeus by God’s commission, of the material building of the second temple. And yet to comfort the Jews withal, he was commanded presently in the same chapter to say thus : *Agg. ii.* ‘Yet now take courage, O Zorobabel, and take courage, O Jesus, the son of Josedec the high priest, and take courage all ye people of the land, saith the Lord of Hosts, and perform the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of the land of Egypt, and my spirit shall be in the midst of you, fear not.* Yet one little while, and I will move the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations : AND THE DESIRED OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME : and I will fill this house (or temple) with glory : saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first, saith the Lord of Hosts.’ Hitherto are the words of God by Aggeus, and the often repetitions of the *Lord God of Hosts*, is to signify the certainty and great weight of the matter promised.

Now consider that whereas God had said immediately before, that this second temple was nothing in respect of the first, for pomp and riches of the material building (which the old men in the book of Esdras, 1 *Esd. iii.* did testify by their weeping, when they saw this second, and remembered the first) yet know God says, that *gold and silver is his own*, (as though he made no account of the abundance thereof in the former temple, or the want of the same in this) and that notwithstanding the poverty of this second building, yet shall it be filled and replenished with glory,† and that in such sort, as it shall surpass in glory the former : and that shall be (as both is here expressed, and elsewhere more plainly) by the Coming of Christ into the second temple, which shall be a greater dignity than any dignity whatsoever that was found in the first building of Solomon’s temple.

Prerogatives of the first temple. Concerning which point it is to be considered that the learned Jews‡, besides the material difference of building before mentioned, do note five things of great importance to have been wanting in the second tem-

* This he says, for that the three monarchies issued, wherein there was continual war and bloodshed.

† This was fulfilled when Christ was personally present, and taught in the temple. Luke i. ii. xix. Matt. xxi. xxvi. &c.

‡ Rab. Samuei tract. Sanhedri. Thalm. Hierosol. Rab. Abr. in l. dierum.

ple, which were in the first, to wit: the fire sent from heaven to burn the holocausts; the glory of God, or Angels, appearing among the Cherubims that stood in the temple; the manifest inspiration of God's spirit upon prophets, for the prophecy failed in the second temple: the presence of the ark; and last of all, the *Urim* and *Thummim*. All which great wants and differences notwithstanding, God says, as you see, that the glory of this second temple shall be much greater than the first, by the coming of Christ into it. Which thing, Malachi the prophet, that lived at the same time when the second temple was building, confirms yet more expressly in these words. *Mal. iii.* 'Behold I send my* Angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face. And presently the Lord whom you seek, and the ANGEL OF THE TESTAMENT, whom you desire, shall come to his temple. Behold he cometh, saith the Lord of Hosts: and who shall be able to think of the day of his coming? and who shall stand to see him; for he is like a refining fire.'

By all which is made evident, that Christ must come and appear in the second temple before it be destroyed; as Jesus did, and therefore he cannot be now to come, seeing the said temple was destroyed above fifteen hundred years past by the Romans, as hath been said. Which destruction and final desolation, was prophecied by Daniel to ensue, soon after the birth and death of Christ, in these words, *Dan. ix.* 'After sixty two hebdomades, Christ shall be slain; and a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation.' Which prophecy to have fallen out literally, about forty years after Jesus was put to death, when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the temple overthrown by Titus, the story of Josephus† the learned Jew, who was a captain against Titus in that war, does manifestly and at large declare.

And for that we have made mention here of Daniel's prophecy concerning the particular time of Christ's coming and his death, which confirms the matter we treat so perspicuously, that nothing can be said more evident; it shall not be amiss to examine the same before we pass any further. For better con-

The second temple to be destroyed presently after Christ's passion.

The fifth proof. The seventy-two hebdomades.

* This Christ interpreted of St. John Baptist, Mat. xi. bello Judaico. l. 6.

† Joseph. de

ceiving whereof, it is to be understood that this Greek word *hebdomada*, signifying seven, doth sometimes import a week of seven days, according to our common use; and then it is *Two kinds* called in scripture *hebdomeda dierum*, a week of *of weeks.* days; as *Dan. x. 2.* where Daniel says that he did mourn three weeks of days. But at other times it signifies the space of seven years, and is called in scripture, *Hebdomeda annorum*, a week of years. As in Leviticus, where it is said :* ‘ thou shalt also number to thee seven weeks of years, that is ‘ to say, seven times seven, which makes forty-nine years.’

Now then it is certain, that Daniel in the prophecy before alleged, where he assigns sixty-two weeks for the time of Christ’s death, could not mean *week of days*; for that he appointed only seven weeks, to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, of the temple, and of the walls about : which were not ended but in forty-nine years after, as may be gathered by the books of Esdras, *Lib. 1* and *2.* which forty-nine years, do make just seven weeks of years. And therefore it is certain, that such *hebdomades* of years are meant here by Daniel in all the prophecy.

First then, when the angel came to comfort him, and to open unto him secrets for the time to come; he said these words, *Dan. ix. 23.* &c. ‘ Mark the word, and understand the vision. Seventy *hebdomades* (or weeks) are shortened upon thy people, and ‘ upon thy holy city; that transgression may be finished, and ‘ sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished; and ever- ‘ lasting justice may be brought, and vision and prophecy may ‘ be fulfilled, and the SAINT OF SAINTS may be anointed.’

In which words it seems that the angel did allude by naming seventy, unto the seventy years of captivity, prophesied by Jeremiah, *Jer. 25* and *29.* which ended, the people should be delivered from their temporal bondage in Babylon. And therefore

Daniel, now being in that place and perceiving the same time to be expired, prayed to God with great instance, to fulfil his promise made by Jeremiah. Whereto the angel answered, that it should be done. And as, after the expiration of seventy years, God was now to deliver them from the bodily captivity of Babylon : so was he also, after seventy *hebdomades* more, to deliver them from bondage of sin and prevarication; and that by the anointed Messias, which is indeed the HOLY OF HOLIES.

* Levit. 25. vide etiam c. 23. et alibi passim.

This, I say, may be the reason of naming seventy *hebdomades*, thereby to allude to the number of the seventy years of that Babylonical servitude. For immediately after, the angel appoints the whole exact number to be threescore and nine *hebdomades*; that is, seven to the building of the city and temple; and threescore and two, from that to the death of Christ; in these words *Dan. ix. 25. &c.* ‘Know *The exact number of weeks from the building of the second temple to the death of Christ 62.* ‘thou therefore, and take notice: *that* from the ‘going forth of the word, to build up Jerusalem ‘again, unto Christ the prince, there shall be *hebdomades*, seven, and *hebdomades* sixty-two; and ‘the street and walls of Jerusalem shall be built ‘again, though with much difficulty of the times: ‘and after sixty and two *hebdomades*, Christ shall be slain. ‘And the people that shall deny him shall not be his, &c. ‘And after the end of the war the appointed desolation.’

Now then, if we put these years together, which are here mentioned by Daniel: that is, first the seven *hebdomades*, which make forty nine years; and then the threescore and two from the restoration of Jerusalem, which make four hundred and thirty-four more; we shall find the whole number to be four hundred and eighty-three years. Which being begun from the first year of Cyrus, as some will, because he first determined the Jews’ reduction: or from the second year of Darius, as others will; for he confirmed and put the same in execution: or from the twentieth year of the said Darius, for that then he made a new edict in favour of Nehemias, and sent him into Jewry: every way they will end in the reign of Herod, and of Augustus, under whom Christ was born; or in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, under whom he suffered. And by no interpretation in the world, can it be avoided, but that this time appointed by Daniel, is now out, above a thousand and five hundred years past, while yet the temple stood, and was not put to desolation. And therefore of necessity Christ must be come about that time, and never more hereafter to be looked for.

The traditions and observations of the old Jews themselves do marvellously confirm this belief of ours; for they all did run to this one point, that about the time of Augustus’s reign, wherein Jesus was born, the Messias should appear. It is often repeated in the *Thalmud*;^{*} that one Elias left this tradition that

The sixth proof.

The traditions of Rabbins.

^{*} *Thalm. tra. sanh. cap. helec. et alibi.*

the world should endure six thousand years, two before the law of Moses: two under the Messias. Which last two thousand years, by all computation, could not begin much from the birth of Jesus. And the Rabbins a great while ago complained in their Thalmud,* that there seemed to them in those days seven hundred and fourteen years past since Christ, by the scriptures, should have appeared, and therefore they do admire why God so long defers the same.

An observation of the Cabalists. Another observation they have upon the words of Isaiah; *Isa. ix. 6. Parvulus natus est nobis*, a child is born unto us. In which words, as they find the Hebrew letter *Mem* to be shut in the midst of a word, (which is strange in that tongue: for *Mem* is wont to be open in the midst of words, and shut only in the end) they gather many secrets. And among others, that since *Mem* signifies six hundred years; so long it should be after Isaiah until the time of Christ.† Which account of theirs falls out so just, that if you reckon the years from Achaz, king of Juda, in whose time Isaiah spoke these words, *Isa. vii.* until the time of king Herod, *Mat. ii.* under whom Christ was born: you shall perceive the number to fail little or nothing.

The observation of R. Moses. A much like observation hath Rabbi Moses, the son of Maimon,‡ (whom the Jews do hold in extreme great reverence, calling him the ‘doctor of Justice’) in his epistle to his countrymen of Africa, concerning the time of Christ’s appearance. Which he thinks to be past, according to the scriptures, above a thousand years in his days: (he lived about the year of Christ one thousand one hundred and forty) but that God defers his manifestation for their sins. To which purpose also appertains the tradition of one Elias (as Rabbi Joshua§ reports in the Thalmud) that the Messias was to be born indeed, according to the scriptures, before the destruction of the second temple; for that Isaiah says of the synagogue: *Isa. lxvi. 7.* ‘before she was ‘in labour she brought forth; before her time came to be delivered, she brought forth a man child.’ That is, *Christ hides himself in the sea.* says he, before the synagogue was afflicted and put to desolation by the Romans, she brought forth the Messias. But yet, says he, this Messias for our sins does hide himself for a time in the sea and other desert places, until we be worthy of his coming.

* Thalm. in tract. avodazara.

† Thalm. in l. Sab. et in tract. Sanhedrin.

‡ R. Mos. Ben. Maimon, Ep. ad Judæos African. § R. Joshua Ben. Levi in Thal. tract. Sanhed. c. helec.

To the like effect is the observation of the Thalmud itself, and of divers Rabbins therein, concerning the wicked manners of men that should be at Christ's appearance upon earth; of whom they do pronounce these words,* 'The wise men in Israel shall be extinguished; the learning of our scribes and pharisees shall be putrified, the schools of divinity shall be stews at that time,' which thing Josephus,† that lived in the same age with Christ, affirms to be fulfilled in the time of Herod; insomuch, that if the Romans had not destroyed them, without doubt, says he, either the earth would have opened and swallowed them down; or else fire from heaven would have consumed them.

The observation of the Thalmud.

All then runs to this end, both by scripture, tradition, observation, and instinct of God himself; that about Herod's time the true Messias should be born. And hereof came that common and public fame that is reported by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Josephus,‡ which was also written in open sight upon the chiefest tower of the city of Jerusalem, that out of Jewry should rise 'A general lord of the universal world' Which prophecy, as the Romans either contemned, or turned another way, applying the same afterwards to Vespasian; so the Jews understood it of their Messias; and Herod feared the matter greatly, and therefore was so watchful to extinguish the line of David, as has been shown.

The seventh proof. Foreboding.

Hence also did proceed, that the Magi, or wise men of the East, attended so diligently about that time, to expect the star that Balaam had promised at the coming of this king. Hence also it was that the whole people of Jewry remained so attentive at this time more than ever before or since, in expecting the Messias. Whereupon, as soon as ever they heard of John Baptist in the desert, they ran unto him, asking if he were Christ? as afterwards also they flocked to Jesus, demanding, *Mat. xi.* 'Art thou he that art to come, or do we expect another?' which words import the great expectation wherein that people remained in those days. Neither was that expectation wanting in the chief governors themselves, as may appear by that speech of theirs to Jesus; *John x.* 'How long dost thou hold our soul in suspense: if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.'

The eighth proof. The general expectation of the people.

* Thalm. tra San. c. hel. Rab. Joah. R. Juda. R. Nehot. &c. † Joseph. l. 20. ant. cap. 6. et 8. et l. 6. de bello Jud. 15. et l. 7. c. 9.
‡ Tacit. l. 21. Sueton. in vita Vesp. Joseph. de bello Juda. l. 7. c. 12

Divers false Christs did rise in Jewry. Of which same expectation, and greedy desire of the people, divers deceivers took occasion to call themselves the Messias in those days, and the people followed them presently; which had not happened in any age before. And among others there is named one Judas Gaulonites, or Galilæus, as St. Luke call-eth him: and another Judas, the son of Ezechias; both of them very wicked and licentious fellows. One also called Atonges, a shepherd; and two others, named Theudus and Egyptius, most notable deceivers.* And above all, there was one Bareozbam, who, as the Thalmud says,† for thirty years together, was received for the Messias by the Rabbins themselves; until at last they slew him, because he was not able to deliver them from the Romans. Which facility in the people, when Herod saw, he caused Nicolaus Damascenus‡, as I noted before, to devise a pedigree for him from the ancient kings of Juda; and so he, as well as others, took upon him to be the Messias, whom divers carnal Jews, that expected the Messias to be a magnificent king, as Herod was, would seem to believe, and divulge abroad, and therefore in the gospel they are thought to have been called Herodiani,§ that is, Herodians, or followers of Herod, who came to tempt Christ with the scribes and pharisees.

The conclusion of this first consideration of the time. Wherefore, to conclude at length this weighty point, of the time of Christ's appearing; seeing that about the birth of Jesus under Herod's reign, there concurred so many signs, and arguments together; as the general peace of the Roman empire; the defection of the line and regiment of Juda; the open decay of the second temple; the just calculation of Daniel's hebdomades; the attestation of oracles; the observation of Rabbins; the public fame and expectation of all the Jews; together with the palpable experience of more than fifteen hundred years past, since Jesus appeared, wherein we see the Jewish people, in vain, expect another Messias, they being dispersed over all the world, without temple, law, sacrifice, prophet, or promise for their redemption) which never happened to them until after Jesus's death; for in all other their banishments, captivities, and afflictions, they had some prophecy, consolation, or promise, for their delivery) all these things, I say, considered, and put together, we may most undoubtedly

* Joseph. l. 17. c. 8. et l. 18, c. 1 et 2, and l. 29. c. 2. 6. † Thal. tract. Sanh. cap. helce Rab. Mos. Ben. Maim. in Sententiis. ‡ Nicol. Damascenus. Joseph. l. 14. antq. c. 2. § Matt. xxii. and Mark xii.

and assuredly conclude, that Jesus was born just at the time appointed and foretold by God's holy spirit ; and consequently that he was the only true Messiah and Saviour of the world ; which yet shall better appear by examination of other things that are to follow.

In the second consideration, there come to be weighed these points following : the line and stock of Jesus ; his manner of conception ; the place of his birth ; his circumcision, and name ; his adoration by the Magi ; his presentation in the temple ; and his flight to Egypt.

*The second
consideration.
Christ's
birth.*

For his line and stock, there was never man denied or doubted, but that Jesus was directly of the tribe of I. *Jesus's line.* Juda, and descended lineally by his mother of the peculiar house of David,* (according as it was foretold that the Messiah, should do) which is proved most clearly by the two genealogies and pedigrees, set down by St. Matthew, *Mat. i.* and St. Luke, *Luke iii.* of the blessed virgin's whole descent from David to Joseph, who was of the same tribe and kindred with her. And it is confirmed by their repairing to Bethlehem, when proclamation was made by Cyrinius,† in Augustus's name, that every person should repair to the head city of their tribe and family to be censured for their tribute ; seeing that Bethlehem, *1 Reg. xvii. 2 Reg. ii.* was the proper city only of them, that were of the house and line of David, king David being born therein. And finally, it is evident, because the scribes and pharisees who objected to matters of much less importance against Jesus, than this (as, that he was a carpenter's son,‡ thereby to debase him for his poverty) yet never objected they against him that he was not of the house of David. Which they would have never omitted, if they might have done it with any colour ; for it would have weighed more against him than all the rest ; and would have, in one word, despatched the whole controversy. Nay, I add further, that it remains registered in the Jews' Thalmud itself,§ that Jesus of Nazareth crucified, was of the blood royal from Zorobabel, of the house of David.

For the manner of his conception, and of the message or annunciation made unto his mother by the Angel *Luke i.* though it depends principally upon the relation and credit of

* *3 Reg. vii. Psalm lxxx. Isaiah xi.* † Of this matter writes Jos. *l. 18. c. 1. ant.* ‡ *Matt. xiii. Luke vi.* § *Thal. tract. Sanh. Nig. mal. had.*

II. the Virgin herself, who only was privy thereunto; and upon the testimony of Joseph, to whom it was revealed by the same angel afterwards: yet he that shall consider the circumstances of the thing itself: as first, the simplicity of both the reporters; then how that it is not likely, that Joseph being just, as he is described, *Mat* i. would have concealed a thing so much against himself, and against the law, if he had not some way been assured of the truth. Thirdly, the innocent age of the blessed Virgin, who was not past fourteen years old at that time, as St. Augustine* and other ancient fathers do prove by manifest argument: all these things, I say, do make it improbable that she would invent such a matter of herself. And finally, the strange prophecy which she uttered in her canticle of *Magnificat*, and which we see now fulfilled, though at that time very unlikely; to wit, ‘that all generations should call her BLESSED.’ These circumstances, he that shall consider, cannot but see that the matter must needs be true.

III. And as for the kind and manner of his nativity, *The manner of Jesus, his nativity.* most manifest it is by scripture, that the Messias was appointed to be born of a virgin; for so says Isaiah plainly: *Isa.* vii. ‘Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son.’ And Isaiah appoints this to king Achaz, for a wonderful and strange sign from God. Which he could not have done in reason, if the Hebrew word in that place might have signified a young woman only, as some latter Rabbins will affirm; for that it is no sign or strange thing, but very common and ordinary, for young women to conceive and bring forth children. Wherefore the *septuagint* do very well translate it in Greek by the proper name of *Virgin*; and so also did the elder Jews understand it, as Rabbi Simeon well notes.† And Rabbi Moses Hadarsan,‡ of singular credit with the Jews, upon these words of the Psalm, ‘truth shall bud forth of the earth,’ &c. says thus. Here Rabbi Joden notes, that it is not said: ‘truth shall be engendered of the earth;’ but ‘truth shall bud forth;’ to signify thereby, that the Messias, who is meant by the word Truth, shall not be begotten as other men are, in carnal copulation. Thus far Rabbi Moses, who in another place, that is upon the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis, alleges Rabbi Berachias to be of the same opinion, and to prove it out of the 100th Psalm, ver. 4.

* Aug. 1 4. de Trin c 5 et l. con. Judæos. c 5 Chrysost. in c. 1. Luke.

† Parthenos Rabbi Simeon, Ben. Johal in c. 2. Gen. ‡ R. Moses Hadar. in Psalm. lxxxiv. 12.

The same is also proved by the plain words of Jeremiah, *Jer.* xxxi. 22. ‘The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth, a woman shall compass or (inclose) a man.’ That is, she shall inclose him in her womb, and bring him forth after a new and strange manner, without generation of man. And finally, Rabbi Hacadosch,* proves by Cabala, out of many places of scripture, not only that the Mother of the Messias shall be a virgin, but also that her name shall be Mary. All the ten Sibyls, in like manner, according as Betuleius† sets out their prophecies, do make special mention of the mother of the Messias, that she should be a most pure and holy virgin: so that this matter was revealed very clearly both to Jew and Gentile before it came to pass. And Clem. Alexandrinus‡ writes, that Simon Magus, to the end he might not seem inferior to Jesus in this point, feigned that he also was born of a virgin as Jesus was.

That Bethlehem, where Christ was born, was the peculiar place pre-ordained by God for the birth of the Messias, the prophet Micheas foretold plainly, when he uttered, divers ages before Christ was incarnate, these words, *Mic.* v. ‘And thou Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one amongst the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the RULER in Israel; and his going forth is from the beginning, from THE DAYS OF ETERNITY. By which words is plainly expressed, that though Bethlehem were but a poor little town, as indeed it was in comparison of many others in Juda; yet therein should be born temporally that governor of Israel, whose divine birth was before the world’s foundation, and from all eternity. And so do interpret this place both Jonathan Ben Uziel, the great author of the Chaldee paraphrase, who died twenty-eight years before Christ was born; and also Rabbi Selomoh and Hacadosch in their commentaries upon this place of Micheas.

The same thing foretold David of Ephrata or Bethlehem, for both names do signify one thing, as appears by the former place of Micheas and others,§ when talking of the Messias, and being desirous to know where he should be born, he says, *Psa.* cxxx. ‘If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house; if I shall go up into the bed wherein I lie: if I shall give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eye-lids, or rest to my

IV.

The place appointed for the birth of the Messias.

* Rab. Hacad. quest. 3. in Ea. cap. 9. † Betuleius in 1 decar. Sibyl
 ‡ Clem. in recognit. § Gen. xxxv. et xlviii. 1 Para. ii.

‘temples : until I find out a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.’ And then the mystery being revealed unto him, he says presently : ‘Behold we have heard of it in Ephrata, or Bethlehem, we have found it in the fields* of the wood.’ And to show how he revered the place for that cause, he adds immediately, ‘We will adore in the place where his feet stood.’ Whereby he prophesies, not only the adoration used after in that place unto Jesus by the Magi, *Mat. ii.* or three kings of the East : but also of all other adoration used in the same place in the memory of Jesus, by other devout christians until this day. For which respect Origen says,† that the place of Bethlehem was most famous and renowned in his days.

V. As for the Angels appearing to the shepherds in *The Angels* the night of the nativity, there can be no more said, *singing.* but the credit, honesty, and simplicity of them that reported it : and likely it is, they would never feign a thing, that might have been refuted by the testimony of the shepherds themselves, if it had been false.

VI. Of the name of *JESUS*, given to him in his circumcision ; it was to be seen set down in a book, *The name* *JESUS.* that howsoever it were not scripture, yet was it extant in the world before Christ was born. I mean the fourth book of Esdras, which has these words, in the person of God the Father : 4 *Esd. vii.* ‘Behold the time shall come, when the signs shall appear that I have told, &c. And my son, *JESUS*, shall be revealed with these who are with him, &c. And after those years my son *CHRIST* shall die ; and the earth shall render those that sleep therein.’ Rabbi Hacadosch‡ also proveth by art Cabalist, out of many places and texts of scriptures, that the Messias’ name at his coming, shall be *JESUS*. And among others, he adds, this reason ; that *Note this* as the name of him who first brought the Jews out *reason.* of bondage into the land of promise was *Jesus* or *Joshua*, which is all one ; so must his name be *Jesus*, that shall the second time deliver them from the bondage wherein they are, and restore them to their old and ancient possessions of *Jewry*, which is the chief benefit they expect by the Messias.

Finally, it is not probable that the virgin Mary should feign this name of herself ; for among the Jews there were many

* This he says, for that in David’s time Bethlehem stood nigh unto woods. † Origen. con Cels. - ‡ Rab. Hac. in Isa. ix. Gen. xlix. et Psalm lxxi. et xcv.

other names of more honour and estimation at that time ; as, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David. And therefore, if they would she feigned any, it is like she would have taken one of them, as soon as this, which had not been the name of any great Patriarch.

There follows the coming of the three Magi, or VII
wise men from the East, of whom St. Cyprian's *The coming*
words are,* 'It is an old tradition of the church, *of the three*
'that the Magi of the East, were kings, or rather *kings.*
'little lords of particular places.' Which is to be understood, such little kings, as Joshua slew thirty in one battle. And it is to be noted that St. Matthew makes mention of the coming of these kings to Jerusalem, *Mat. ii.* as of a known and public matter whereof all Jerusalem, and Jewry was able to bear him witness. For he talks of their open coming to Jerusalem; and of their enquiry for the new born king; of their speech and conference had with Herod; as also of Herod's consultation with the scribes and pharisees about the place of the Messias' birth. And finally he shows the most barbarous murder that ensued of almost innumerable† infants in all the circuit of Bethlehem for this matter. Which could not be a thing unknown to all Jewry, and much less feigned by St. Matthew; for he should have given his adversaries the greatest advantage in the world, if he had begun his gospel with so notorious and open an untruth, which might have been refuted by many persons that were yet alive.

Epiphanius is of opinion‡ that these kings arrived in Jerusalem two years after Christ's nativity: for that Herod slew all infants of that age. But others§ hold more probably, that the star appeared unto them two years before Christ's nativity, so that they came to Bethlehem the thirteenth day after Christ's birth, according as the church doth celebrate the Epiphany. St. Basil thinks|| that they were learned men, and might by their learning and art-magic (wherein those countrymen at that time were very skilful) understand and feel that the power of their heathen gods was greatly diminished and broken. They might also be stirred up by that common report and general prophecy, spread over all the East in those days, as both Suetonius and Josephus do record¶, 'That out of Jewry should come an uni-

* Cypr. set de Bap. et idem Tert. l. 3. con. Marchion. Hillar. l. 4. de Trin. Josh. 12. † Fourteen thousand, as says the liturgy of the Ethiopians and Calend. Græcorum. ‡ Eph hæres 51. § Ammon. Alex. in Herm. Niceph l. 1 c. 13. || Basil ser. in nat. dom. ¶ Suet in Vespas. c. 4 Joseph. l. 7 de bel c. 12.

versal king over all the world.' By these means I say, and by the prophecy of Balaam, *Num.* xxiv. left among them from Moses's time (for he was a Gentile) whereby was signified that a star should rise and declare a great and mighty king in Israel; they might be induced at the sight of this star to take so long a journey as they did towards Jewry.

*Prophecies
of things
that should
fall out in
Bethlehem.*

This star, as I have said, was foretold by Balaam, a heathen prophet, above fifteen hundred years before it appeared. And after Balaam, again it was prophesied by David, *Psal.* lxxi. 10. that kings of Arabia, Saba, and other countries, should come and adore Christ, and offer both gold and other gifts unto him. The murder also of the infants of Bethlehem was presignified by Jeremiah, *Jer.* xxxi. 15. in the weeping of Rachel for the slaughter of her children; which Rachel was buried in Bethlehem, *Gen.* xxxv. 19. and for that cause those infants were called her children, though she was dead above two thousand years before Jeremiah wrote the prophecy. Amongst which infants, Herod also, for more assurance, slew an infant of his own. For that as Philo notes,* he was descended by his mother of the line of Juda. Which cruelty coming to Augustus's ears, he said, as Macrobius reports,† that he had rather be Herod's swine than his son; for he being a Jew, Herod. was forbidden by his religion to kill his swine, though not ashamed to kill his son.

The same star whereof we speak, is mentioned by divers heathen writers, as Pliny,‡ under the name of a comet (for they so termed all extraordinary stars) which appeared in the latter end of Augustus's days, and was far different from all others that ever appeared. And therefore contrary to the nature of those kind of stars, it was adjudged by the whole college of soothsayers to portend universal good to the earth; and for that use had an image of metal erected to it in Rome; and as Pliny's words are, *Is Cometa unus, toto orbe colitur*; that only comet is worshipped throughout the whole world.

Origen§ also writes of one Cheremon, a stoic, that was much moved with the consideration of this star, and after the appearance thereof, he perceiving the power of his gods decayed, took a journey into Jewry, in company of other astronomers, to inform himself further of the matter. Whercupon Chalcidius|| a platonic doth add, that the Chaldean astrono-

* Philo l. de temp. † Macrob. l. Saturnal. c. 4. ‡ Plin. l. 2. c. 25.
§ Origen. cont. Cels. || Chalcid. apud Mars. Ficini. tract. de stella Mag

mers did gather by contemplation of this star, that some God descended from heaven to the benefit of mankind. And finally the Sibyl's talking of the coming of Christ, affirmed* plainly, *Rutilans eum sidus monstrabit*, a blazing star shall declare him. Which prophecy Virgil the poet having read in Augustus's time, and soon after having seen the same fulfilled; applied it, as I showed before, of all the rest, to the flattering of Cæsar, and therefore he says in the place before alledged.

Ecce Dionæi processit Cæsaris astrum.†

Behold the star of Cæsar (descended of Venus) hath now appeared; which star indeed, was the star of Cæsar's Lord and Master.

After forty days past over, St. Luke reports, *Luke ii. 22.* 'how Jesus by his mother was presented in the temple of Jerusalem'; and therewithal recounts two strange things that happened at the same time; to wit, that two grave and reverend persons, Simeon surnamed just; and Anna the prophetess (both of singular sanctity amongst the Jews) coming into the temple at the very time, when Jesus was there in his mother's arms; took notice of him, and acknowledged him publicly for the Messias and Saviour of the world. Foretelling also by the spirit of prophecy, divers particular things, that were to ensue, both to Christ and Christians, especially to his mother, the blessed Virgin. Which things being published at that time, and confirmed afterwards by the event, do well declare, that this narration of St. Luke could not be forged; as do also the number of particular circumstances set down about the time, place, and persons most notoriously known to all Jerusalem. For, as for Anna, she had lived from her youth until fourscore years of age in the temple; and thereby was known to the most part of Jewry.

The presentation of Jesus at Jerusalem.

Anna, the prophetess. Simeon.

And as for Simeon, he was the scholar of the most famous Hillel,‡ and condisciple to Jonathan, maker of the Chaldee paraphrase of whom I spoke before: and the Jews Thalmud does confess§, that by the death of these two men, (but especially of Simeon) failed the spirit of the great synagogue called Sanhedrim: which after the captivity of Babylon, until Herod's time, supplied, in a sort, the spirit of prophecy that was expressly in Israel before the said captivity.

* Sibyl. Sama apud Retul. † Eclog. 4. ‡ Thal. tract. pickei Avoth. § Thal. tract. Joma. cap. Tereph. Gecalphi.

Christ's flight into Egypt. Of Christ's flight into Egypt for fear of Herod, St. Matthew well notes, *Mat. ii.* that it was prophesied by Hosea long before; *Hosea xi.* 'That God would call his son out of Egypt.' And the prophet Isaiah describes the same very particularly, when he says: *Isaiah xix.* 'Behold the Lord will ascend or ride, upon a swift cloud;' which was his flesh or humanity; 'and will enter into Egypt' 'and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence.' Which latter point, Eusebius* shows that it was fulfilled most evidently, in the sight of all the world. For no nation came to the Christian religion with so great celerity, or with so great fervour, as did the Egyptians, who threw down their idols before any other heathen nation. And as they had been in idolatry before other countries; so were they the first, by Christ's coming unto them, that afterwards gave example of a true return to their Creator. It follows in *Isaiah*: 'And I will deliver Egypt into the hands of cruel masters: and a strong king shall rule over them.' Which was fulfilled about the very time wherein Christ was to come. For then after many spoils and cruelties exercised upon Egypt by the Roman lords and princes, Pompey, Cæsar, Anthony, and others; in the end, Cleopatra their queen (that was the last of all of the blood and line of the Ptolomies) was forced to slay herself: and so Augustus took possession of all Egypt, and subjected it as a province, to the Roman empire.

But consider you how Isaiah concludes this matter, after all these temporal afflictions, threatened against Egypt: and confess, that such adversity is no sign of God's displeasure, to them who receive it. For thus says God, after all his comminations. 'In that day, there shall be an altar of the Lord in the midst of the Land of Egypt; they shall cry to the Lord because of the oppressor; and he shall send them a SAVIOUR, &c. A blessing in the midst of the land, which the Lord of Hosts hath blessed, saying: Blessed be my people of Egypt.' And here we make an end of our second consideration.

The third consideration. In the third place, there comes to be considered, according to our former division, the life, conversation, doctrine, and miracles of Jesus. And first, *I. The life and actions of Jesus.* touching things done by him after his coming out of Egypt (which might be about the sixth or seventh year of his age) until his baptism by St. John (which was the thirtieth) there is little recorded either in profane or

* Euseb. l. 6. dem. c. 20. et l. 9. c. 2, 3, 4.

ecclesiastical writers. For, as St. Justin, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and others do write; he bestowed that time in the common exercises and labours of man's life: thereby to show himself true man, and give demonstration how much he detested idleness.

Of St. John Baptist, all Hebrew writers of that time do make mention, with exceeding praise and admiration of his holiness: especially Josephus,* that lived *Of St. John Baptist.* immediately after Christ's days, says: he was *Vir optimus, Judæos excitans ad virtutem studia.* A most excellent man, stirring up the Jews to the exercise of virtue. He adds also, that partly for fear of the great concourse of people, which flocked unto him: and partly by the solicitations of Herodias, concubine and brother's wife to Herod Antipas, the great Herod's son, (for whose sake he had turned off his own wife, daughter of Aretas, king of the Arabians,) he was apprehended, and imprisoned in the castle of Acheron, and therein soon after put to death. Which murder Josephus esteemed to be the cause of all the misery which ensued afterwards to Herod and his whole family.

Of this man it was written by Malachy the prophet, *Mal.* iii. 'Behold, I send my Angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face, and presently the Lord whom you seek, and the ANGEL OF THE TESTAMENT whom you desire shall come to his temple.' Which prophecy was fulfilled most evidently when upon the preaching of St. John, Christ came unto him: and though St. John had never seen him before, yet he acknowledged him for the Messiah in the presence of infinite people: and his acknowledgement was confirmed by the visible descending of a dove and a voice from heaven, in the sight and hearing of all the people present; according as three of our Evangelists do report.† Which they would never have presumed to do, had not the matter been most evident, and without all compass of denial or contradiction.

*St. John's
behaviour
towards
Christ.*

And truly no one thing in all this story of Jesus's life does more establish the certainty of his being the true Messiah, than that John Baptist (whose wisdom, learning, virtue, and rare sanctity, is confessed and recorded by the writings of all our adversaries) should refuse the honour of Messiah offered to himself, and lay it upon Jesus: as also should direct those disciples that depended of him, to the only following and em-

* Joseph 1. 12. antiq. c. 7. † Matt. 3. Mark 1. and Luke 3.

bracing of Jesus's doctrine. Which is most evidently proved that he did; for of so many followers and disciples as he himself had, no one appeared ever after that was not a Christian.

When Jesus was baptised he began to preach: and his whole doctrine was directed to the manifestation of his fa-

ther's will and amendment of man's life. It tended all to this one ground and principle: 'Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy soul; and thy neighbour as thyself.*' It was plain, easy, perspicuous, and evident; though it treated of most high mysteries.

Heathen doctrine. It had neither pomp nor pride of rhetorical words, nor flattering of man's wickedness, as the doctrine of many philosophers had. Neither consisted it of un-

Jewish ceremonies. profitable external ceremonies, as the latter observances of the Jewish law did; nor was it fraught

Turkish Alcoran. with carnality and spirit of this world, as the Turkish Alcoran and other sectaries' doctrine is: but all was simplicity, all was spirit, all was truth, all was honesty, all was humility, all was charity.

It took away or disannulled no one perfect or spiritual point of Moses's law; but rather revived, interpreted, fulfilled, and made perfect the same. For whereas that commanded external observance, this added also internal obedience. Whereas that

The comparison of Christ's law with that of Moses. said, love your friends; this adjoined, love also your enemies. *Mat. v.* Whereas that commanded we should not kill; this further commands to speak no angry words. Whereas that prohibited to commit actual adultery; this also forbids to covet in mind.

Whereas that said take no interest or usury of Jews that are thy countrymen; this says, take it of no man whatsoever. Whereas that accounted every Jew only to be thy neighbour; this teaches every man living to be thy brother. Whereas that taught thee to offer up a calf, a sheep, or an ox, for thy sins; this instructs thee to offer up a contrite heart in the blood of him that died for all, with a firm purpose of

The effect of Christ's doctrine. amendment of life. And finally, this doctrine tends wholly to the true, sincere, and perfect service of

God thy Lord, that made and redeemed thee, to the exultation of his only name, power goodness, and glory; to the depression of man's pride, by discovering his misery: to the contempt of this world and vain pomp thereof: to the mor-

tification and subduing of our sensual appetite : to the true love and unfeigned charity of our neighbour ; to the stirring up of our spirit to celestial cogitations, peace of conscience, tranquillity of mind, purity of body, consolation of soul ; and in one word, to reduce mankind again to a certain state of innocency, simplicity, and angelical sanctity upon earth, with his eye fixed only on the eternal inheritance of God's kingdom in heaven.

This was the doctrine delivered by Jesus : which is the same that God's prophets foretold should be delivered by the Messias. And as for his life and conversation ; by the testimony of his greatest adversaries, it was more admirable than his doctrine : his life being a most lively table, wherein the perfection of all his doctrine was expressed. A man of such gravity, as never in his life was he noted to laugh ; of such humility ; as being the Son of God, he scarce used in this world the dignity of a servant : of such sweet and mild behaviour ; that all the injuries of his enemies, never wrested from him one angry word. Finally, he was such an one, as he was described by Isaiah, so many ages before he was born, in these words, *Isaiah* xlii. ' He shall not cry nor have respect to persons, neither shall his voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench.' And another Prophet, not long after him, broke forth into this speech upon the behaviour that should be in the Messias ; *Zach.* ix. ' Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion ; shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem : BEHOLD THY KING will come to thee, the just and Saviour : he is poor and humble,' &c. And as the prophets did foretel the virtue and sanctity of the Messias ; so the devils themselves could not but confess the same to have been fulfilled in the person of Jesus ; as it is most evident by the testimony of Porphyrie, a professed enemy of the christian name : who, after consideration of divers oracles uttered by his idols, touching Jesus, breaks into this confession :* ' It is exceeding wonderful, what testimony the gods do give of the singular piety, and sanctity of Jesus ; for which they avouch him rewarded with immortality ; but yet these Christians are deceived in calling him God.' Thus much writes Porphyrie. And last of all, Josephus the Jew, that was born immediately after him, writes of him thus :† ' There was at this time one Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man : a worker

III. *The life and conversation of Jesus.*

* Porphyr. l. de laud. philos.

† Joseph. l. 18. ant. c. 7.

‘ of most wonderful miracles ; and a master, and teacher of all such men, as willingly were content to embrace the truth.’

IV. *Of Josephus’s testimony of Jesus’s miracles.* In which testimony of Josephus, we see mention also of Jesus’s miracles, which is the next thing whereof we are to consider. And as Josephus in

this place, being a Jew, bears witness that Jesus performed many strange miracles : so most apparently, and according to the interpretation of Josephus in this place, were the same miracles foretold by the prophets of God, that they should be done by the true Messias. So Isaiah in his twenty-fifth chapter describes at large, how the Messias at his coming, shall declare his commission by giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and agility of body to the lame and cripple. And that which is more marvellous, God revealed this point very particularly to the Gentiles by the Sibyls : among whom one of

them wrote thus of Christ to come, as Lactantius records.* ‘ He shall do all by his only word ; he shall cure all infirmities ; he shall raise the dead : he shall make the lame to run and skip, the deaf shall hear, the blind shall see, and the dumb speak. In five loaves and two fishes, five thousand persons shall be satisfied : and the fragments shall fill twelve baskets, to the hope of many. He shall command the winds, and walk upon the furious sea, with his feet of peace.’ And after divers other Greek verses to this purpose, she concludes in these words : ‘ Men shall say, that I am a mad and lying prophetess : but when these things shall come to pass, then remember me ; for then shall no man say more, that I was a liar, but rather the prophetess of the great God.’

To these predictions of prophets in Jewry, and among the Gentiles, do agree the doctors of the Jews themselves in many places of their Thalmud ;† to wit, that the Messias shall be wonderful in working miracles. And in their public commentary upon ecclesiastes, they have these words,‡ ‘ All the former miracles of prophets and saints shall be nothing to the miracles of the Messias, when he comes.’ And thus much

of the foretelling of Christ’s miracles. But now for the fulfilling thereof in Jesus ; that is, how these predictions were performed in the stupendous works and actions of our Saviour, there is no difficulty. For, besides the former testimony of Josephus,

* Lact. l. div. Institut. c. 15. † Thal. tract. Beraoothica mermathas. Colio. ‡ Misdrach Coheleth, cap. 1.

(which were sufficient in this case) the Jews themselves do grant and record Jesus's miracles in divers treatises of their Thalmud :* yea, they make mention of many wonderful things which Jesus did, that are not written by our Evangelist. The same doth Mahomet in his Alcoran ;† affirming Jesus the Son of Mary, to have been a great Prophet, and to have wrought his miracles by the only power and spirit of God ; and that himself was sent to confirm Jesus's doctrine, saving only in the point of his Godhead ; wherein he says, that Jesus went too far, and had a check for the same at God's hand, when he returned to heaven.

Thus much do these enemies confess of Jesus's miracles. Which as it is much, coming from such witnesses ; so if they would either deny or dissemble the same, they might be proved against them by most evident reasons ; especially in two points wherein there can be no probability of denial.

The first is, the calling and retaining of his Apostles and other followers (whereof Josephus also in the place before alleged,† makes mention, as of a great miracle) who were of divers callings, states, conditions, trades, and occupations in the world. And yet all upon the sudden, left both father, mother, wife, children, and other temporal respects ; and followed him, who had nothing to give or promise them in this world. A man that never spoke them fair, nor uttered doctrine, that was not repugnant to the sensuality of this life ; as may appear by their own writings and testimonies of him. A man that was contemned by the better sort, as then it might seem ; that is, by the wise and learned of that country ; and especially disliked by them that were in government, as a dangerous man to the state. One that had neither friends in the world to bear him out, nor house to put his head in : and yet, notwithstanding all this ; that worldly men and women, and some such also as were great sinners and loose livers before, should leave all their worldly hopes, state, and condition, to follow such a man, with so great inconveniencies, losses, dangers, and disadvantages as they did ; and should continue with him in all his afflictions, and be content to die and lose their lives, rather than forsake him or abandon his service : this, I say, is such a miracle, as never was wrought, as must needs be granted by the enemy to be supernatural.

The calling of the Apostles.

* Thal. in tract. Avoda Zara Misdrach Coheleth.
l. 4. 11. 13.

† Joseph. l. 18. ant. c. 4.

† Alcoran Azoar.

The second point is of external things and facts done by *The miraculous facts of Jesus.* Jesus, above all power and human ability, in the sight and knowledge of all the Jews; which facts were published by our Evangelists, and especially by St. Matthew, in the Hebrew tongue; while yet the persons were alive, upon whom they were wrought; or infinite others that might be witnesses thereof.

I. As for example, the raising of Lazarus in Bethania, *John xi.* that was a village but a mile or two distant from Jerusalem; at whose death and burial (being a gentleman) many scribes and pharisees must needs be present (according to the Jewish custom, at that time, reported by Josephus*) and they saw him both deceased, interred, and the funeral feast observed for him; as also raised again by Jesus four days after his burial. With whom they did both eat and drink, and converse, after his return to life; and every day might behold him walking in the streets of Jerusalem. This story, I say, how could it be feigned?

II. So in like manner, the raising of the archi-synagogue's daughter, whose name is affirmed to be Jarius, *Mat. ix.* and *Mark v.* with divers other circumstances that do make the thing most notorious.

III. The raising of the widow's son before the gate of the city of Naim, *Luke vii.* in the presence of all the people that bore the corse and stood about it.

IV. The healing of the cripple in Jerusalem, *John v.* that had lain eight-and-thirty years lame at the pool's side, or bath, called Probatika: which miracle was done also in the sight of infinite people.

V. The casting out of a legion of devils, *Mat. viii.* and *Mark v.* from a man that for many years together was known to live possessed in the mountains; which devils, by peculiar license obtained of Jesus, entered into a herd of swine, and so presently carried them away into the sea and drowned them; whereupon the whole country about of the people called Gerasines, being struck with fear upon the sight of the fact, besought Jesus most humbly to depart from their borders.

VI. The feeding and filling more than five thousand men, besides women and children, *Mat. xiv.* and *Luke ix.* with five barley loaves and two fishes only.

VII. The turning of water into wine, at the marriage of Canaa, in the presence of all the guests.

* Joseph 1. 17. ant. c. 11.

VIII. The healing of him by a word only, that had an incurable dropsy, *Luke*, xiv. and this at the table of a principal pharisee, and in the sight of all that sat at dinner with him.

These, I say, and divers other such miracles, which were done in the presence and sight of infinite people, and recorded by our Evangelists at such time, when many desired to discredit the same, and might have done it so easily by many witnesses and authority, if any part thereof had been subject to calumny, cannot in reason or probability be doubted of. And therefore I must conclude, that seeing these things are above all human nature, and could not be done but by the finger and virtue of God himself; considering also that it is impossible that God would assist or give testimony to falsehood, it must needs ensue, that all was true and sincere which Jesus affirmed: and consequently seeing he affirmed himself to be the Son of God, and the true Messias, it must needs follow by these miracles, that he was so indeed; which is the ground of that speech of his to the faithless pharisees: *John* x. ‘If you will not believe my words, believe my deeds.’ And thus much of Jesus’s life, doctrine, conversation and miracles.

The conclusion of this consideration.

There remains now only the fourth and last consideration of this section: which is, the passion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. And about his passion there is little or no controversy; for all his enemies do agree and grant, that he was betrayed by his own disciple, apprehended, afflicted, and delivered up by the Jews, and finally put to death upon a cross by the Gentiles. The testimony of Josephus may suffice for all herein.* Whose words are, ‘That the principal Jews of his country, having accused and delivered over Jesus to Pilate, (that was governor of Jewry for the Roman emperor) he adjudged him to the cross.’ The same do all other Jews and Gentiles record; and in this they take great offence and scandal, that we should attribute divinity unto a man that had suffered on the cross.

The fourth consideration. The passion and resurrection.

But if we show that this was the eternal pre-ordination and appointment of God, for saving of mankind; and that the same was foretold both to Jew and Gentile from the beginning; and so understood also by the Jewish doctors of elder times: then every reasonable man, I believe, will remain satisfied, and prefer God’s divine wisdom before man’s folly.

* Joseph. l. 18. ant. c. 4

First then consider, that when Christ had ended his preaching, and wrought so many miracles as seemed sufficient to his eternal wisdom; and when the time pre-ordained for his passion was come, (whereof he told publicly his disciples before,) he went up to Jerusalem on purpose to receive his death, *Mat. xx.* and *Mark viii.* and made solemn entry into that city upon an ass, *Mat. xxi.* which was prophecied of him by Zachariah, many years before: *Zac. ix.* ‘Rejoice, daughter of Sion, behold thy JUST KING and SAVIOUR shall come unto thee upon an ass.’

And after his abode some days in that place, he was betrayed and sold by his own disciple,* as David beforehand in many places† had foretold should come to pass. Then followed his apprehension and most servile usage by the Jews; whereof it was prophecied long before by Isaiah, *Isa. l.* ‘I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me.’

After this barbarous treatment by the Jews, they delivered him over to Pilate a Gentile, and never ceased to solicit and pursue their unquenchable hatred against him, until they saw him on the cross. Where also he was used in the highest degree of spiteful dealing. Whereof the aforesaid David made mention long before in the person of the Messias, when he said: *Psalm xxi.* ‘They have dug my hands and feet, they parted my garments amongst them: and upon my vesture they cast lots.’ And again of another cruelty he complains, saying: ‘They gave me gall to eat; and in my thirst they refished me with vinegar.’

And finally, that Christ should die for the sins of mankind, is a common principle, both prefigured and foretold throughout all the old scripture. Prefigured by the sacrifice of Isaac; *Gen. xxii.* by the raising up of the brazen serpent, *Numb. xxi.* and by all other sacrifices that were in that law. Foretold, not only by the scriptures before alleged, but also most plainly by Daniel, who was told by an Angel, that after a certain time by him appointed: *Dan. ix. Ungetur sanctus sanctorum.* The saint of saints shall be anointed, *et occidetur Christus*, this anointed saint or Christ, shall be put to death. Zachary also, *Zach.*

* Mark x. and xvi.

† Psalm. 40. 54. 108.

xii. about the same time doth not only foretel his death, but also the kind thereof, and from what people he should receive the same : for thus he says in the person of Christ himself. ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem,—at that day, shall look upon me whom they have pierced.’

But if ye will read the whole story of Christ’s passion, set down at large six hundred years before it fell out ; I refer you to a narration of Isaiah, who to signify the strangeness of the case begins with this preface : *Isa. liii.* ‘Who hath believed our report,’ &c ? And then, after a little, he goes on in these words : ‘He shall grow up as a root out of a thirsty ground : there is no beauty in him, nor comeliness : and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him : despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity : and his look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows : and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one strick by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins : the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way : and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth : he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer.’

The most wonderful prediction of Christ’s passion by Isaiah.

Christ’s deformity upon the cross.

was as it

Christ appointed to die for our sins.

The increase of Christ’s kingdom after his resurrection.

‘For the wickedness of my people have I struck him. Because he hath done no iniquity, neither was their deceit in his mouth. And the Lord was pleased to bruise him in infirmity : if he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in his hand. Because his soul hath laboured, he shall see and be filled : By his knowledge shall this MY JUST SERVANT* justify many, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I distribute to him very many, and he shall divide the spoils of the strong, because he hath delivered his soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked : and he hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors.’

* That is, in making himself known, or revealing the knowledge of himself to the world.

The particulars of Christ's passion foretold by Sibylla.

Thus particularly, as you see, was the death and passion of Christ foretold by the prophets of Israel to that nation. Now, if ye please, hear ye the prophecy of Sibylla, wherein she foreshowed the same to the Gentiles. These are her words set down by Lactantius :* ‘ He shall appear miserable, ignominious, and deformed : to the end he may give hope unto the miserable. Afterwards he shall come into the hands of most wicked and faithless men ; they shall spit upon him with their unclean mouths. He shall yield his innocent back to the whip, and shall say nothing while he receives the stripes, to the end he may speak to those that are dead. He shall bear a crown of thorns ; and they shall give him gall to eat and vinegar to drink. And this shall be the hospitality he shall find among them.’ What can be more plainly described than this ?

The consent of Rabbins.

Neither do the ancient Rabbins and teachers among the Jews dissent from this. For in their *Thalmud*† that was gathered above twelve hundred years ago, the plain sentence of divers are set down that their Messiah, at his coming, shall be put to death. And as for Rabbi Jonathan,‡ author of the Chaldee paraphrase, who died a little before Christ was born, he applies the whole narration of Isaiah before recited (as needs he must) to the murder of the Messiah by the Jews. Whereupon Rabbi Simeon, that lived in the next age after, writes these words following :§ ‘ Wo be to the men of Israel, for that they shall slay the Messias. God shall send his Son in man’s flesh to wash them, and they shall murder him.’ Whereto agrees Rabbi Hadarson|| and others, and do prove further out of the fore-alleged prophecy of Daniel, that after Messiah shall have preached half seven years, he shall be slain. For that Daniel says, *Dan. ix. 27.* ‘ In the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail.’ Upon which words they comment thus : ‘ Three years and a half shall the presence of God in flesh cry and preach upon the mount Olivet ; and then shall he be slain.’ Which words the Jews ordinary¶ commentary upon the Psalms doth interpret to be meant of Christ’s preaching three years and a half before his passion ; which disagrees very little or nothing from the account of us Christians, and of our Evangelists.

Lactan. l. 4. div. Instit. c. 1. 16. † Thal. tract. San. cinelec. Misdrach. ‡ Ruth. Rab. Joseph. in l. Siph. Rab. Jacob. and R. Hanima. in cap. hel. Isaiah 53. § Rab. Simeon Ben. Johal. lib. de spe. || R. Hedar. in Dan. ¶ Misdrach Tchelim.

And so we see by all that hitherto has been said, that the very particulars of Christ's whole death and passion were foretold most plainly both to Jew and Gentile, and acknowledged also by the ancient doctors of the Jewish nation, before the accomplishment thereof came to pass. And Sibylla adds further two particular miracles, that should fall out in the said passion of the Messias, to wit:* 'That the veil of the Jews' temple should break in two; and that at mid-day there should be darkness for three hours over all the world.' Which thing to have been fulfilled at the death of Jesus, not only St. Matthew doth assure us in his Gospel, *Mat.* xxvii. but also Eusebius affirms,† that he had read the same word for word, recorded in divers heathen writers. And amongst others he cites one Philegon,‡ an exact chronicler, that reports the same in the fourth year of the two hundred and second olympiad; which agrees just with the eighteenth year of Tiberius's reign, wherein our Saviour suffered. And he goes so nigh as to name the very hours of the day, which our Evangelists do. Æsculus,§ also an old astronomer, does confirm the same, and proves moreover by the situation and constitution of the sun and moon at that time, that no eclipse could then be natural. Which thing in like manner Dyonisius Areopagita|| did observe in the very day of Christ's passion, being at that time but twenty five years old, and well studied in astronomy, as he himself testifies. And finally, Lucianus, a learned priest of Antioch, was accustomed to provoke the Gentiles to their own commentaries and stories, for record and testimony of those things.

There ensues now, for ending and confirmation of all that hath been said and proved before to add a word or two of Jesus' resurrection. Which point, as of all others it is of most importance; so was it most exactly foretold both to Jew and Gentile; and promised by Christ himself in all his speeches while he was upon earth. And among the Jews it was assured by all the prophecies before recited, which do promise so great abundance of glory, joy, and triumph, to Christ's Church after his passion. Which never possibly could be fulfilled, unless he had risen from death again. And therefore the said resurrection was prefigured in Jonas, *Jonas* ii.; together with the time of his abode in the

Of the miracles that fell out in Christ's death and passion.

Of Jesus's resurrection.

* Lact. l. 4. div. Instit. c. 19. † Euseb. in Chron. An. Dom. 32. ‡ Phil. leg. Trallian. l. 24. Chron. An. 4. Olim. 202. § See Origen cont. Cels. l. 6. et Suid. in verbo Jesus. Tert. in Apolog. § Dion. in Areop. in ep. Lucian pr. apud Eus.

sepulchre. It was also expressly foreshown by David, affirming: *Psalms* xv. 'That God would not permit his holy one 'to see corruption.' And after him again, more plainly by Hosea: *Hosea* vi. 'He will revive us after two days: on 'the third day he will raise us up; and we shall live in his sight.' And to the Gentiles, Sibylla left written, not far from the same time: * 'He shall end the necessity of death by three 'days sleep: and then returning from death to life again, he 'shall be the first that shall show the beginning of resurrection 'to his chosen: for that by conquering Death, he shall bring 'us life.'

Thus much was promised by Prophets before Christ's appearance. And Jesus, to comfort his disciples and followers, reiterated this promise himself in many speeches; † though oftentimes his meaning was not perceived. Which promise of return from death, if it has been made for some long time to come (as Mahomet ‡ promised his Saracens after eight hundred years to revisit them again) although the performance was never meant, yet might the falsehood lurk in the length of time. But Jesus assuring all men that he would rise again within three days; it cannot be imagined but that he sincerely purposed to perform his promise, for otherwise the fraud must soon have been discovered. Now then let us consider what manner of performance Jesus made hereof.

And first, the persons most interested in the matter, as they whose total hope, stay, refuge, and felicity depended hereof. I mean his appalled, dismayed, and afflicted disciples, do recount twelve sundry apparitions, which Jesus made to them in flesh after his resurrection. The first to Mary Magdalen apart, *Mark* xvi. when she, with Salome and other women, went and remained with ointments about the sepulchre. The second was to all the aforesaid women together, *Mat.* xxviii. as they returned homewards; *Cor.* xvi. who also were permitted to embrace his feet. The third was to Simon Peter alone, *Luke* xxiv. The fourth to the two disciples in their journey to Emmaus, *Joa.* xx. The fifth was to the Apostles and other Disciples together, when the doors were shut. The sixth was to the same company again after eight days, when Thomas was with them, *Joa.* xx. at which time also he did both eat and drink, and

The appearance which Jesus made after his resurrection.

* Lact. 1. 4. Just. div. cap. 19.

viii. ix. x. and Luke xi. xviii. John ii. Azoar. 17.

† Mat. xi. xvi. xvii. xx. Mark

‡ Mahom. in Alcor.

suffer his body to be handled among them. The seventh was to St. Peter and St. John with five other disciples, when they were fishing, *Joa.* at which time also he vouchsafed to eat with them. The eighth was to eleven disciples at one time, upon Mount Tabor in Galilee. *Mat.* xxviii. The ninth was to five hundred brethren at one time, as St. Paul testifies. *1 Cor.* xv. The tenth was to St. James, as the same apostle records. *Ibid.* The eleventh was to all his apostles, and disciples, and friends together, upon the mount Olivet by Jerusalem, *Acts* i. when in their presence he ascended up to heaven. The twelfth and last, was after his ascension, unto St. Paul, *1 Cor.* xv. as himself bears witness.

All these apparitions are recorded in scripture, as made by Jesus after his resurrection, to such, as by his eternal wisdom were pre-ordained to be witnesses of so glorious a spectacle. To whom as St. Luke affirms, *Acts* i. ‘He showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days, appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And why any man should mistrust the testimony of these men that saw him, conversed with him, eat with him, touched him, and heard him speak; and whose entire estate and welfare depended wholly of the certainty thereof; I see no reason. For what comfort had it been or consolation to these men to have devised of themselves, these former apparitions?

Circumstances that confirm the true resurrection of Jesus.

what encouragement might they have taken, in those doleful times of desolation and affliction, to have had among them the dead body of him, on whose only life their universal hope and confidence depended? the scribes and pharisees being astonished with the sudden news of his rising again, confirmed unto them by their own soldiers that saw it, found no other way to resist the fame thereof, but only saying (as also their posterity do unto this day) that his disciples came by night, and stole away his body whilst the soldiers were asleep. But what likelihood or possibility can there be in this? for first it is evident to all the world, that his apostles themselves, (who were the heads of all the rest) were so dismayed, discomfited, and dejected at that time, that they durst not once go out of the door. For which cause only those women, who from their sex esteemed themselves more free from violence, presumed alone to visit his sepulchre; which no one man durst, for fear of the soldiers; until by these women they were informed, that the aforesaid band of soldiers were terrified and put to flight by Christ’s resurrection.

Great improbabilities.

And how then is it likely, that men so much amazed and overcome with fear, should adventure to steal a body from a guard of soldiers that kept it ? or if their hearts had served them to adventure so great a danger : what hope or probability had there been of success? especially, considering the said body lay in a new sepulchre of stone, shut up and locked, and fast sealed by the magistrate ? how was it possible, I say, that his Disciples should come thither ? break up the monument ? take out his body ? and carry the same away, never after to be seen or found ; without being discovered by some one amongst so many that attended there ? or if this were possible (as in reason it is not) yet what profit, what pleasure, what comfort, could they receive thereby ; we see that these Apostles and Disciples of his, who were so abandoned of life and heart in his passion, were afterwards so changed, that life and death can be no more contrary.

The great change in Jesus' Disciples by his resurrection.

For, whereas, before they kept home in all fear, and durst appear no where ; except among their own private friends : now they came forth into the streets and common places, and avouched with all alacrity, and irresistible constancy ; even in the faces and hearing of their greatest enemies : that Jesus was risen from death to life ; that they had seen him ; spoken with him ; and enjoyed his presence. And that for testimony and confirmation hereof, they were most ready to spend their lives. And could all this think you proceed only from a dead body, which they had gotten by stealth into their possession ? would not the presence and sight of such a body ; so torn, mangled, and deformed as Jesus's body, both upon the

The examination of the matter by Pilate.

cross and before, have rather dismayed them more, than have given them comfort ? yes truly. And therefore Pilate the governor, considering these circumstances ; and that it was unlikely, that either the body would be stolen without privy of the soldiers ; or if it had been, that it should yield such life, heart, consolation and courage to the stealers : began to give ear more diligently to the matter, and calling to him the soldiers, that kept the watch, understood by them the whole truth of the accident : to wit, that in their sight and presence, Jesus was risen out of his sepulchre to life ; and that, at his rising there was so dreadful an earthquake with trembling and opening of sepulchres round about ; such shrieks, and cries, and commotions of all elements : that they durst not abide longer, but ran and

told the Jewish magistrate thereof ; who being greatly discontented, as it seemed, with the advertisement ; gave them money to say that while they were sleeping, the body was stolen by his disciples from them.

All this wrote Pilate presently to his lord Tiberius, then emperor of Rome. And he sent withal, *Pilate's letter to Tiberius, and his proceeding thereupon.* the particular examinations and confessions of divers others, that had seen and spoken with such as were risen from death at the same time, and had appeared to many of their acquaintance in Jerusalem ; assuring them also of the resurrection of Jesus. Which information, when Tiberius the emperor had considered, he was greatly moved, and proposed to the senate, that Jesus might be admitted amongst the rest of the Roman Gods ; offering his own consent, with the privilege of his supreme royal suffrage to that decree. But the Senate in no wise would agree thereunto. Whereupon Tiberius being offended, gave license to all men to believe in Jesus that would : and forbid upon pain of death, that any officer or other, should molest or trouble such as bore good affection, zeal, or reverence to that name. Thus much testifies Tertullian against the Gentiles of his own knowledge ;* who living in Rome, being a learned man, and pleader of causes, divers years before he was a Christian, (which was about one hundred an eighty years after Christ's ascension) had great ability by reason of the honour of his family, learning, and place wherein he lived, to see and know the records of the Romans. And the same does confirm also Egesippus,* another ancient writer of no less authority than Tertullian, before whom he lived.

Not only divers Gentiles had this opinion of Jesus's resurrection again from death ; but also sundry Jews of great credit and wisdom at that time, were forced to believe it : notwithstanding it pleased not God to give them so much grace as to become Christians. This appeared plainly by the learned Josephus, who writing his history not above forty years after Christ's passion, took occasion to speak of Jesus and of his disciples ; and after he had showed how he was crucified by Pilate, at the instance of the Jews : and that for all this his disciples ceased not to love him still : he adjoins forthwith these words :† *Idcirco, illis tertio die vita resumpta,*

The opinion of the wiser sort of Jews touching Jesus's resurrection in that time.

* Tertul. in Apol. pro Christian.
21. Ruffin. l. x. cap. 22.

† Egesip. l. 1. hist. Euseb. l. 4. c.

denuo apparuit. That is, for this love of his disciples he appeared unto them the third day, when he had resumed life: Which express, plain, and resolute words we may in reason take, not as the confession only of Josephus, but as the common judgment, opinion, and sentence of all the discreet and sober men of that time, laid down and recorded by this historiographer; in whose days there were many Christians yet alive, that had seen and spoken with Jesus after his resurrection; and infinite Jews that had heard the same protested by their fathers, brethren, kinsfolks, and friends, who had been themselves eye witnesses thereof.

Of Jesus's ascension. And thus having declared and proved the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus, both how it was foreshowed, as also fulfilled, there remains nothing more of necessity to be said in this section. For whoever sees and acknowledges, that Jesus, being dead, could raise himself again to life, will easily believe also that he was able to ascend to heaven. Whereof notwithstanding, St. Luke alleges, *Acts i.* six score witnesses at the least, in whose presence he ascended from the top of Mount Olivet, after forty days space which he had spent with them from the time of his resurrection. He alleges also the appearing of two angels among all the people, for testimony whereof he names the day, the place, when and where it happened. He recounts the very words that Jesus spoke at his ascension. He tells the manner how he ascended, and how a cloud came down and received him into it.

Likelihoods of truth. He declares what the multitude did, whither they went, and in what place they remained after their departure thence. And finally, he sets down so many particulars, as it had been the easiest matter in the world for his enemies to have refuted his narration, if all had not been true. Neither was there any to receive more damage by the falsehood thereof than himself, and those of his profession, if the matter had been feigned.

The conclusion of this third section. Wherefore to conclude at length this treatise of the birth, life, doctrine, actions, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus; seeing nothing has happened in the same which was not foretold in the prophets of God; nor any thing foreshowed by the same prophets concerning the Messias, which was not fulfilled exactly, within the compass and course of Jesus's abode upon earth; we may most certainly assure ourselves, that as God can neither foretel an untruth, nor yield testimony to the same: so can it not be, but that these things which we have

shewed to have been so manifestly prophecied, and so evidently accomplished; must needs ascertain us, that Jesus was the true Messias; which thing shall yet more particularly appear, by that which ensued by his power and virtue, after his ascension; which shall be the argument of the section that follows.

SECT. IV.—*How Jesus proved his Deity, after his departure to Heaven.*

As by the deeds and actions of Jesus, while he was upon earth, compared with the predictions of God's prophets from time to time he hath been declared in the former sections, to be the true Messias and Saviour of the world; so in this that we now take in hand, shall the same be shewed by such things, as ensued after his ascension and departure from this world, wherein his power and deity appeared more manifestly, if it may be, than in his other works, which he wrought in his life. In which kind, though I might treat of many, and almost infinite branches; yet for order and brevity sake, I mean only to take into consideration these few that ensue; whereon not only the power of Jesus, but also his love, his care, and most perfect accomplishment of all his speeches, prophecies and doctrine upon earth have been declared

The contents of this fourth sec.

And to reduce what is to be said herein to some order and method; it is to be noted, that in the first place shall be considered the protection, increase, and continuation of Jesus's little church and kingdom, that himself first planted and left upon earth. The second consideration shall be of his apostles and their actions. The third of his Evangelists. The fourth of his witnesses and martyrs through the world. The fifth shall treat of the kingdom of infernal powers, beaten down by his virtue. The sixth, of the punishment and just revenge that lighted upon his enemies, who most impugned his divine person in this world. The seventh and last shall declare the fulfilling of all such prophecies and predictions, as proceeded from his divine mouth, while he was conversant upon earth.

The division of the particular considerations ensuing.

Now then for the first it is to be considered, that at Jesus's departure out of this world from the mount Olivet, St. Luke reports, that all the multitude of his followers, which there had beheld his ascension into heaven, returned back together into the city of Jerusalem, and there remained in one house together; continuing in prayer, and expectation of what should become of them.

The first consideration, Christ's Church.

The whole city was bent against them ; themselves were poor and simple people : and divers of them women : lands or revenues they had not to maintain them : nor friends in court to give them countenance against their enemies. The name of Jesus was most odious ; and who soever did favour him, was counted a traitor and enemy to the state. There wanted not perhaps, among them, who, considering the great multitude, would imagine with themselves, what should become of themselves ? where they should find to maintain and sustain them ? what should be the end of that feeble congregation ? abroad they durst not go, for fear of persecution ? and continue long

*The state
of Christ's
first com-
ing.*

together they might not, for want of necessaries. Besides every hour they expected to be molested and drawn forth by catchpoles and officers. And although in these distresses, the fresh memory of Jesus, and his sweet promises made unto them at his departure ; as also the delectable presence of his blessed mother, and her frequent exhortations and encouragements unto them, did comfort them greatly, as well may be supposed, yet to him who by human reason should ponder and weigh their present state and condition ; it could not choose but seem hard, and no ways durable.

But behold upon a sudden, when they had continued now ten days together, and might by all probability find themselves in very high degree of temporal distresses ; Jesus performing his promise, of sending them a COMFORTER, *Acts*, ii. which was the Holy Ghost. By whose coming besides the internal joy, and incredible alacrity and exultation of mind, they received also fortitude and audacity to go forth into the world. They received the gift of tongues, enabling them to converse and deal with all sorts of people. They received wisdom and learning with most wonderful illumination in highest mysteries, whereby to preach, to teach and convince their adversaries. They received the gift of prophecy to foretel things to come ; together with the power of working signs and miracles, whereby the world remained astonished. And for a taste of that which would ensue, concerning the infinite increase of that little congregation ; they saw three thousand of their adversaries converted to them in one day, by a sermon of St. Peter's.

Which increase went on so fast, for the time that ensued,

that within forty years after, the Gentiles themselves confess,* the branches of this congregation were spread over all the world, and began to put in fear the very emperors themselves. Whereof not long after, a man as learned as ever was any, converted from Paganism to Christianity, bears record in apology to an emperor and his officers, who according to the nature of persecutors, accounted Christians for traitors to his state and dignity; which vulgar objection, this foresaid learned man refutes in these words.†

‘If we were enemies to your estate, you might well seek new cities and countries, whereof to bear government; for that you should have in your empire more enemies than citizens. We have filled your towns, your cities, your provinces, your islands, your castles, your fortresses, your tents, your camps, your courts, your palaces, your senates, and your market places. Only we have left your idolatrous temples unto yourselves; all other places are full of Christians. If we were enemies what dangerous wars might we make against you, though our number were far less, who esteem so little our lives as to offer ourselves daily to be slain by your hands? this then is your safety in very deed, not your persecuting of us; but that we are honest, patient, and obedient; and that it is more lawful in the Christian religion, to be killed, than to kill.’

By which words of Tertullian, in this first beginning and infancy, as it were, of Christian religion (for he lived in the second age after Christ) we see how this little flock and kingdom of Jesus was increased; notwithstanding all the resistance, and violence of the world against it. Which appears by the same Tertullian‡ to have been such, and was even at that time when he wrote these words, (the fourth persecution being then in most fury) that all the male factors of the world together had not so much rigour shewed against them, as had the most innocent Christian that lived, for confessing only that name and religion.

This declared most apparently, that it could not proceed, but from some divine power and supernatural assistance, that in so short a space, amidst the contradiction and opposition of so many adversaries: among the whips, and swords, and tortures, of so great, potent, and violent persecutors; this poor, sim-

The wonderful quick increase of Christ's Church.

The increase of Christians against nature.

* Seuton in vita Nero. Corn. Tac. 1. 5. hist, † Tertullian in Apolog. ad Gentes. ‡ In præfat. Apolog.

ple, and feeble congregation should pierce through and augment itself so strongly. Especially, if we consider the outward means of this increase; wherein there was nothing to allure, or content man's nature; nothing gorgeous, nothing delectable, nothing to please or entertain sensuality.

We read of an emperor, that taking in hand to conquer the world, he made this proclamation for winning men unto his party* ; 'Whosoever will come and be my servant; if

*The proclamation
of Cyrus
Monarch
of Media.*

'he be a footman, I will make him a horseman,
'If he be a horseman, I will make him ride in
'coaches. If he be a farmer, I will make him a
'gentleman. If he possess a cottage, I will give
'him a village. If he have a village, I will give
'him a city. If he be lord of a city, I will
'make him prince of a region and country. And as for
'gold, I will pour it forth unto them by heaps and weight,
'and not by number.'

This was Cyrus's edict and proclamation to his followers, very glorious, as we see, in pomp of words and ostentation of style. Let us now compare the proclamation of Jesus, whose entrance and preface

Jesus's proclamation.

was : *Matt. iii. pœnitentiam agite* : Do penance. And then it followed : *John xvi. in hoc mundo pressuram habebitis* : in the world you shall have distress. And then again, *Matt. x.* 'They shall deliver you up in councils, 'and they will scourge you.' And yet further, 'You shall 'be hated by all men, for my name's sake.' Then there is adjoined, 'He that loveth his life shall lose his soul.' After that ensues : 'He that will follow me, must bear his cross.' And finally the conclusion is ; 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, 'he cannot be my disciple.'

This was the entertainment proposed by Jesus, *Luke xiv.* to such as would come to serve under his banner : with express protestation, that himself was sent into the world, not to bring peace, rest, and ease, to flesh and blood ; but rather to be the cause of sword, fire, tribulation, combat, and enmity. And yet with these cold offers, presented to the world by poor, abject, and most contemptible officers ; and by this doctrine, so cross and opposite to man's nature, inclination and sensual appetite ; he gained

* Plutarch in *Apoth. Pris. reg.*

more hearts unto him within the space of forty years, as has been said, than ever did monarch in the world possess loving subjects, by whatsoever temporal allurements they did, or might propose. Which argues most evidently, the omnipotent power of Him, that contrary to all appearance, could bring to pass so miraculous a conquest.

There follows in order, the consideration of Christ's apostles; which in some respect may be said more strange and wonderful than the former: in that they being both rude and simple, and unlearned men (and for the most part of the lower sort) should be chosen and assigned to so great a work, as was the conversion of all countries, and nations; and to stand in combat with the power, learning, and wisdom of all the world. Neither only had they to contend, and fight against their enemies; but also to direct and govern, and manage all those, who should be adjoined to their master's kingdom. To which charge they seemed so unfit, and insufficient in all that time, wherein they lived with him upon the earth; that by their questions and demands made unto him, a little before his passion, they might appear to have learned very little, in three whole years conversation, and instruction; and, in very deed, to be incapable of so high mysteries, and functions.

Yet notwithstanding, these men, who of themselves were so weak and impotent, after strength and confirmation received by the descending of God's holy spirit into them; became so perfect, able, and most excellent men, that they brought the whole world in admiration of them: not only by the most exquisite perfection of their doctrine (wherein of a sudden, without study, they excelled and convinced the greatest Philosophers then living) but also, and this especially, by the rare and stupendous miracles, which they wrought in the sight of all men. The contemplation whereof, as St. Luke reports, *Acts ii.* drove the beholders, not only into great marvel, but also into fear and exceeding terror.

And for example, he recounts the restoring of a lame man at the temple gate of Jerusalem; who had been a cripple for the space of forty years or more; and the miracle done and testified in the presence, and knowledge of all the city. He records also the dreadful death of Ananias and Saphira, *Acts v.* by the only speech and voice of St. Peter; as in like manner, the

healing of infinite sick people, by the presence and shadow of the same apostle. He reports the most wonderful deliverance of the said St. Peter, *Acts* v. out of the hands and prison of Herod by an angel. The variety of languages, which all the apostles spoke. The visible descending of the Holy Ghost upon all such, on whom the said apostles did but lay their hands. The miraculous conversion of St. Paul. *1 Cor.* xv. & *2 Cor.* xii. by Christ's appearing unto him in the way, when he went to persecute him. Of which miracle, St. Paul gave witness in every place afterwards; *Acts* ix. xxii. xxvi. and once especially, in open audience and judgment, before Agrippa the king, and Festus governor of Jewry.

These miracles, and many more, are recorded by St. Luke, whereof some part were seen by himself, and the rest more evident to all the world, as done in public before infinite witnesses. Neither is it possible they could be forged; for as I have noted before, it had been most easy to have refuted them, and thereby to have discredited the whole proceedings of Christian religion in those first beginnings. As for example, if the miracle of Peter's

The miracles reported of the Apostles, could not be feigned.

delivery forth of the hands, and prison of Herod Agrippa had any way been to be touched with falsehood; how many would there have been of Herod's officers, courtiers, servants, or friends, that, for defence of their prince's honour (so deeply tainted by this narration of St. Luke, published not long after the thing was done) how many, I say, would have offered themselves to refute, and disgrace the writers thereof, having so pregnant means by public record to do the same? So again, whereas, the same Luke reports of his own knowledge, *Acts* xvi. that in a city of Macedonia, named Philippi, St. Paul, and Silas, after many miracles done, were whipped, and put in prison, with a diligent guard, in the lowest prison of all, there locked fast in the stocks of timber; and that at midnight, when Paul and Silas began to pray, the whole prison was shaken, and all the doors thrown open; as also the shackles, not only of those two, but of all the other prisoners, upon a sudden burst assunder; and that thereupon, not only the jailor cast himself at the feet of Paul, but the magistrates also, who the day before had caused them to be whipt, came and asked them pardon, and entreated them to depart from their city: this story, I say, if it had been false, there needed no more

for confutation thereof, but only to have examined the whole city of Philippi which could have testified the contrary.

And yet, amongst so many adversaries, and eager impugnors of Christian religion, as God's enemy stirred up in the primitive church, of all sorts and sects of people; no one ever appeared that durst attempt to take in hand the particular disproving of these or the like miracles; but rather confessing the facts, sought always to discredit them by other sinister calumniation: namely and commonly, that they were wrought by the deceits and slights of art-magick. Thus said the Jews of the miracles of Jesus, *Matt. xii.* and so said Julian the apostate* of the wonderful strange things done by St. Peter and St. Paul; affirming them to have been the most expert in magick of any that ever lived; and that Christ wrote a book of that profession, and dedicated it to Peter and Paul; whereas notwithstanding, it is most evident, that Paul was a persecutor divers years after Christ departed. One Hierocles also wrote a book,† wherein he feigns Apollonius Tyanæus to have done the like miracles by magick, which Christ and his apostles did by Divine power. And finally, it is a general opinion, that both Nero, and Julian gave themselves so extremely to the study of that vain science, as no men ever did the like; upon emulation only of the miracles done in Rome by Peter, and Paul, when Nero lived: and by other saints and disciples, in the time of Julian.

But what was the end? Pliny‡ that was a Pagan writes thus of Nero. As no man ever laboured more than he in that science; so no man left a more certain testimony of the marvellous exceeding vanity thereof. The like in effect writes Zosimus§ of Julian, though himself a malicious heathen. And if it were not written, yet their extraordinary calamities, and most miserable deaths, which by all their magick they could not foresee, do sufficiently testify the same unto us; especially the last words of Julian; || *Vicisti, Galilæe, vicisti.* Thou hast overcome, O Galilean, thou hast gotten the victory; acknowledging thereby, as well the truth of Christ's miracles, and of his followers: as

None ever durst impugn the miracles of our Apostles but by calumniation.

* Apud Cyril. 1. 1. con. Jul. Aug. li de vera Relig. † Euseb. 1 cont. || i r. ‡ Plin. 1. 30. Nat. hist. c. 1. § Zosimus in vit. Julia. || Niceph. I 10 c. 35. hist.

also the vanity, folly, and madness of his own endeavours.

Thus then went forward Christ's Apostles, *The success of the Apostles* and preached him every where throughout the world; *Matt. xvi. Domino cooperante and sermonem confirmante, sequentibus signis*; that is,

our Lord Jesus working with them, and confirming their preaching by signs and miracles. In respect of which benign assistance of Jesus in their actions, St. Luke says further : *Acts xiv.* 'They stayed there, acting confidently 'in the Lord; who gave testimony to the word of his grace, 'granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.' No persecution, no terror, no threats of enemies, no difficulty, or danger that might occur, could stay them from their course of setting forth Christ's name and

glory. And they were so assured of the truth *The assurance of the Apostles.* by the inward illuminations which they had; and by this certain testimony of God's favour, and assistance in doing miracles; that one of them

writes thus; *1 John 1.* 'That—which we have heard, 'which we have seen with our eyes, which we have diligently looked upon, and our hands have handled concerning 'the word of life—that we do testify and announce unto 'you.' And another,* who had been a grievous persecutor; and was converted without conference with any Christian in the world, said of Jesus Christ that was dead, and risen again : that *Rom. viii.* 'Neither tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, 'or the sword,' could separate him from the service of such a master. And in another place, he says : *Phil. iii.* that he esteemed all things in this world, wherein a man might glory, to be as 'very dung and dross in respect of the eminent knowledge of his Lord Jesus Christ.' In which very name, he took so exceeding great delight; that in a few epistles which he left written, he is observed to have used the sentence *Dominus noster Jesus Christus*, our Lord Jesus Christ, above two hundred times.

Neither endured this in these Apostles, for a *The joyful ending of the Apostles.* time only, but all their lives, which as they spent with alacrity in the service of Jesus, so in the end they gave up the same most cheerfully, to

* St. Paul.

whatsoever death presented itself for confirmation and sealing of their former doctrine ; never so full of confidence, courage and consolation as at that hour : nor ever so boldly announcing their master, or talking so joyfully of rewards, crowns and kingdoms, as at the very last instant and upshot of their worldly combat.* This then declares most manifestly, that the actions of these men proceeded not of human spirit, nor could be performed by the power of man ; but by the divine force, and supernatural assistance of their Lord and God, whom they confessed.

And thus much in brevity of Christ's Apostles. There ensue his Evangelists : that is, such men, as have left unto us written, his birth, life, doctrine, and death. Wherein is to be noted, that Jesus being God, took a different way from the custom of man, in delivering unto us his laws and precepts. For, men who had been law-makers unto the world, know no surer way of publishing their laws, and procuring authority to the same, than to write them with their own hands and in their lifetime to establish their promulgation. So Lycurgus, Solon, and others, among the Grecians : Numa to the Romans : Mahomet to his Saracens ; and divers others in like manner. But Jesus, to shew his divine power in directing the pen and style of his Evangelists, would not leave any thing written himself ; but passed from this world in simplicity and silence, without any further shew or ostentation of his own doings ; meaning notwithstanding by his eternal wisdom, that the prophecy of Ezekiel, *Ezek. i.* should be fulfilled, which foresignified the being of his four irrefragable witnesses, which day and night without rest should preach, extol, and magnify their Lord and Master to the world's end.

Four then were prophesied ; and four as we see by God's providence were provided, to fulfil the same prophecy. The first and last are two Apostles, that wrote as they had seen. The middle two are two Disciples, who registered things as they had understood by conference with the Apostles. The first Gospel

The third consideration. Of the Evangelists

Jesus left nothing written by himself.

The different qualities, and circumstances of the four Evangelists.

* Tim. iv. 1. Thes. ii

was written by an Apostle; to give authority and confirmation to all the others. The first was written in Hebrew or Jewish tongue, for that Jesus's actions were done in that country; to the end that either thereby the whole nation might believe them, or the obstinate impugn them. The other three were written in the publick tongues of all other nations; that is, in the Greek and Roman languages: if it be true,* which divers hold, that Saint Mark's Gospel was written in Latin.

Circumstances of truth in our Evangelists.

They wrote their histories in divers countries; each one remaining far distant from another; and yet agreed they all, as we see, most exactly, in the very same narration. They wrote in divers times, the one after the other; and yet the latter did neither correct nor reprehend any thing in the former. They published their histories, when millions were alive, that knew the facts; and many more, that desired to impugn them. They set down in most of their particular narrations, the time, the day, the hour, the place, the village, the house, the persons, the men, the women, and other the like. Which circumstances the more they are in number, the more easy to be refuted, if they were not true. Neither did they in Jewry write of things done in India; but in the country itself: in towns and cities, that were publickly known; in Bethania, and Bethsaida, villages hard by Jerusalem; in the suburbs, and hills about the city; in such a street; at such a gate; in such a porch of the temple; in such a fish pool, which all people in Jerusalem did every day behold.

The publishing of our gospels.

They published their writings in their own life time, and preached in word, as much as in writing they had recorded. They submitted the same to the judgment and examination of all Christ's Church; especially of the Apostles, who were able to discern the very least thing therein contained. So Mark set forth his gospel, by the instruction and approbation of St. Peter; as also did St. Luke by the authority of St. Paul. † They altered not their writings afterwards, as other authors are wont, in their latter editions; nor did they ever correct, what they at first set down. And which never hap-

* See Armacan, l. 9. de quæst. † Hieron. in Catalog. Scrip. Ecc

pened in any other writings in the world besides, nor ever prince or monarch was able to bring to pass, for credit of his edicts or sanctions ; they gave their lives for defence, and justifying of what they had written.

Their manner of writing is sincere and simple ; *The manner of style in our Evangelists.* without all art, amplification or rhetorical exornation. They flatter none, no not Jesus himself, whom they most adore : nor in confessing him to be their God and Creator, do they conceal his infirmities of flesh, in that he was man : as his hunger and thirst, his being weary, how he wept, his passions of fear, and the like.* So likewise, in the apostles that were the governors, superiors, and heads of all the rest, do these avangelists dissemble, hide, or pass over no such things as were defects, and might seem to worldly eyes, to turn to their discredit. As for example ; how Christ rebuked them for their dullness in understanding ; how after long instruction they proposed notwithstanding very rude and impertinent questions unto him : how Thomas would not believe the attestation of his fellows : how St. John, and St. James, the sons of Zebedee, ambitously solicited to have the pre-eminence of sitting nearest to Christ in glory.† Which latter clause, being set down clearly by St. Mark, while yet St. John the apostle was living ; the same was never denied, nor taken ill by the said apostle ; neither was St. Mark's gospel the less approved by him ; though he lived longest, and wrote last of all the rest.

Nay, which is more, and greatly, no doubt, *A special point to be observed in our Evangelists.* to be observed : these evangelists were so sincere and religious in their narrations ; that they noted especially the imperfections of themselves, and of such others, as they principally respected. So St. Matthew names himself, *Matt. x.* 'Matthew the publican.' And so St. Mark, being Peter's disciple, records particularly, *Mark xiv.* how Peter denied his master. St. Luke, that was a scholar and dependant of St. Paul, makes mention alone, *Acts xv.* of the little differences between Paul and Barnabas : and in the story of St. Stephen's death, after all his narration ended, he adds a clause, that in human judgment might have been left out, to wit, *Acts vii.*

* *Matt. xxi. Mark ii. John vii. and Luke xix.* † *Matt. xv. John x. xi. and xx. and Mark x.*

Saulus erat consentiens neci ejus. Saul was consenting and guilty of Stephen's death. Whereby we may perceive most perspicuously, that as these men were plain, sincere, simple, and far from presuming to devise anything of themselves ; so were they religious, and had scruple to pass over or leave out anything of the truth, in favour of themselves or of any other whatsoever.

These men's writings then were published and received for undoubted truth, by all that lived in the very same age, and were privy to the particulars therein mentioned. They were copied abroad into infinite men's hands ; and so preserved with all care and reverence, as holy and divine scripture. They were read in churches, through-

No doubt but that we have the true writings of our evangelists.

out all countries and nations, expounded, preached, and taught by all pastors ; and commentaries made upon them by holy fathers, from time to time. So that no doubt can be made, that we have the very same writings incorrupt, as the authors left them ; for it was impossible for any enemy to corrupt so many copies over all the world, without discovery and resistance. And the same very text, words, and sentences, which from age to age, the learned fathers do alledge out of these scriptures we find them now, as they had them at that time. As for example, St. John that lived longest of all the apostles and the evangelists, had among other scholars and auditors Papias, Ignatius, and Polycarpus ; all which agree on the four gospels, and other writings left unto us in the new testament : affirming St. John to have approved the same. These men were masters to Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and others, whose writings remain unto us. And if they did not, yet their sayings and judgments touching the scriptures, are recorded unto us by Eusebius,* and other fathers of the next age after ; and so from hand to hand until our days. So that of this, there can be no more doubt, than whether Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and other such renowned cities, known to all the world at this day, be the very same, whereof authors have treated so much in ancient times.

And thus much of Christ's evangelists, for whose more credit, and for confirmation of things by them recorded, his divine providence pre-ordained, that infinite witnesses, whom we call martyrs, should offer up their blood in the primi-

The fourth consideration. Of Martyrs.

* Euseb. 1. 5. hist. c. 15

tive church, and after. Whereas for no other doctrine, profession, or religion in the world, the like was ever heard of; though among the Jews, in the time of the Maccabees,* and at some other times also, when the nation for their sins was afflicted by heathen princes, some few were barbarously and injuriously put to death; yet commonly and for the most part, this was rather of barbarous fury in the Pagans, for their resistance, than directly for hatred of Jewish religion. And for the number, there is no doubt, but that more Christians were put to death within two months, for their belief throughout the world, than were of Jews, in two thousand years before Christ's coming. Which is undoubtedly a matter very wonderful: considering that the Jewish religion impugned no less the Pagan idolatry, than does the doctrine of the Christians. But this came to pass, that Christ's words might be fulfilled, who said, *Matt* x. 'I came not to send peace, but the sword.' And again, '*Matt* x. I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' That is to say, to be torn and worried, and your blood to be devoured.

In which extreme and almost incredible suffering of Christians, three points are worthy of great consideration. The first, what infinite multitudes of all states, conditions, sex, qualities, and age, did suffer daily for testimony of this truth.† The second what intolerable and unaccustomed torments not heard of in the world before, were devised by tyrants for afflicting this kind of people. The third, what invincible courage, and unspeakable alacrity the Christians shewed in bearing out these afflictions, which the enemies themselves could not attribute, but to some divine power and supernatural assistance.

Three points to be considered in our Martyrs.

And for this latter point of comfort in their sufferings, I will alledge only this point of Tertulian against the Gentiles who objected that wicked men suffered also, as well as Christians. Whereto this learned doctor made answer in these words:‡ 'Truth it is, that many men are prone to ill, and do suffer for the same; but yet dare they not defend their evil to be good, as Christians do their cause.

The singular alacrity of christians in their sufferings

* Maccab. 1. 1. and 2. † See the narration of Philæas bishop in Africa touching this point, alledged by Eusebius, 1. 8. hist. c. 11 and 12. ‡ Tertul. in apolog. c. 1.

‘ For that very evil thing by nature, does bring with it
 ‘ either fear or shame : and therefore we see, that malefac-
 ‘ tors, although they love evil, yet would they not appear
 ‘ so to the world, but desire rather to lie in covert. They
 ‘ tremble when they are taken ; and when they are accused
 ‘ they deny all ; and do scarce oftentimes confess their do-
 ‘ ings upon torments. And finally, when they are condemn-
 ‘ ed, they lament, moan, and do impute their ill fortune to
 ‘ destiny or to the planets. But the Christian, what does
 ‘ he, like unto this ? Is there any man ashamed ? or does
 ‘ any man repent him, when he is taken ; except it be that
 ‘ he was not taken sooner ? if he be noted by the enemy
 ‘ for a Christian, he glories in the same : if he be accused,
 ‘ he defends not himself ; if he be asked the question, he
 ‘ confesses it willingly : if he be condemned, he yields
 ‘ thanks. What evil is there then in this Christian cause,
 ‘ which has the natural sequel of evil ? I mean, fear, shame,
 ‘ tergiversation, repentance, sorrow, and deploration ?
 What evil, I say, can this be deemed whose guiltiness is
 joy ; whose accusation is desire ; whose punishment is
 happines ?

Hitherto are the words of the learned Tertul-
Jesus’s as- lian, who was an eye witness of what he wrote,
sistance to and had no small part in the cause of those that
his Mar- suffered ; being himself in that place, and state,
tyrs. that daily he might expect to taste of the same
 affliction To which combat how ready he was, may ap-
 pear by divers places of this his apology, wherein he ut-
 ters, besides his zeal and fervour, a most confident security,
 and certain assurance of Jesus’s assistance, by what he had
 seen performed to infinite others in their greatest distresses,
 from the same Lord before. So that nothing does more
 ascertain us of the divine power and omnipotency of Jesus,
 than the invincible fortitude, which above all human reason,
 force, and nature, he imparted to his martyrs.

After which consideration, there comes to be
The fifth weighed the fifth point before mentioned,
considera- which is, of the same power and omnipotency
tion. of Jesus, declared, and exercised upon the infer-
The subjec- nal spirits. Which thing partly may appear the
tion of spi- oracles alledged in the end of the former section
 (wherein those spirits foretold that a Hebrew child should
 be born, to the utter subversion and ruin of their tyrannical

dominion) and much more at large, the same might be declared, by other answers and oracles uttered after Christ's nativity, registered in the monuments, even of the heathens themselves. Whereof he that desires to see more ample mention (especially out of Porphyry, who then was living) let him read Eusebius's sixth book, *De preparatione Evangelica*, where he shall find many; and namely, that Apollo many times exclaimed : *Hei mihi, congemiscite ! Hei mihi ! Oraculorum deficit me claritus ?* Wo unto me ! lament you with me ! wo unto me, the honour of oracles hath now forsaken me. Which complaints and lamentations are nothing else but a plain confession that Christ was he, of whom a prophet said divers ages before, *Sopho. ii. Attenuabit omnes Deos terræ* : he shall wear out and bring to beggary all the gods or idols of the earth. This confessed also the wicked spirits themselves, when at Christ's appearing in Jewry, they came unto him at divers times, and besought him, not to afflict or torment them ; nor command them presently to return to hell ; but rather to permit them some little time of entertainment in the sea, or mountains, or among herds of swine, or the like. Which confession they made in the sight of all the world ; and declared the same afterwards by their facts and deeds.

For presently upon Jesus's death, and upon the preaching of his name, and gospel throughout the world, the oracles which before were abundant in every province and country, were put to silence. Whereof I might alledge the testimonies of very many Gentiles themselves, as that of Juvenal.*

*Of the miraculous
ceasing of
oracles at
Christ's
appearing.*

Cessant Oracula Delphis,

All oracles at Delphos do now cease, &c. That also of another Poet :†

*Excessere omnes adytis, arisque relictis
Dii quibus imperium hoc steterat, &c.*

That is, the Gods, by whom this empire stood, are all departed from their temples ; and have abandoned their altars

* Juv. Satyr. 6. † Lucan.

and places of habitation. Strabo also hath these express words :* ‘The Oracle of Delphos, at this day, is to be ‘seen in extreme beggary and mendicity.’ And finally Plutarch† that lived within one hundred years after Christ, made a special book, to search out the causes why the oracles of the Gods were ceased in his time. And after much turning and winding many ways, resolved upon two principal points, as causes thereof. The first, that in his time there were more wise men than before, whose answers might stand instead of oracles : and the other, that peradventure the spirits, which were accustomed to yield oracles, were by length of time grown old and dead. *Two sufficient causes.* Both which reasons in the common sense of all men must needs be false ; and by Plutarch himself, cannot stand with probability. For first, in his books, which he wrote of the lives of ancient famous men, he confesses, that in such kind of wisdom, as he most esteemed, they had not their equals among their posterity. Secondly, in his treatises of philosophy, he passes it for a ground ; that spirits, not depending of material bodies, cannot die, or grow old ; and therefore of necessity, we must conclude, that some other cause is to be yielded, of ceasing of these oracles ; which cannot be, but the presence and commandment of some higher power, according to the saying of St. John : 1 John iii. ‘For this purpose the son of God ‘appeared, that he might destroy (or overthrow) the works ‘of the devil.’

Neither did Jesus this alone, in his own person ; but gave also power and authority to his disciples and followers to do the like ; according to their commission in St. Matthew’s Gospel : *Matt. x.* ‘He gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out.’ Which commission, how they afterwards put in execution the whole world yield testimony. And for example sake only, I will alledge in this place, an offer or challenge made for proof thereof, by Tertullian, to the heathen magistrates and persecutors of his time ; his words are these,‡ ‘Let there be brought here ‘in presence before your tribunal seats some person, who ‘is certainly known to be possessed with a wicked spirit ;

* Strab. 1. 7. Geograph. † Plutarch. de perfect. Oracul. ‡ Tertul. in Apolog. ad Gentes.

‘ and let that spirit be commanded by a Christian to speak ;
 ‘ and he shall as truly confess himself to be a
 ‘ devil, as at other times to you he will falsely *A most con-*
 ‘ say, that he is a God. Again, at the same time, *fident offer*
 ‘ let there be brought forth one of these (your *made by*
 ‘ priests or prophets) that will seem to be possessed *Tertullian.*
 ‘ by a divine spirit ; I mean of those that speak gasping,
 ‘ &c. (In whom you imagine your Gods to talk) and ex-
 ‘ cept that spirit also, commanded by us, do confess him-
 ‘ self to be a devil, being indeed afraid to lie unto a Chris-
 ‘ tian, do you shed the blood of the Christians in that very
 ‘ place, &c. None will lie to their own shame, but rather
 ‘ for honour or advantage : yet those spirits will not say to
 ‘ us, that Christ was a magician, as you do : nor that he was
 ‘ of the common condition of men. They will not say he was
 ‘ stolen out of his sepulchre ; but they will confess that he was
 ‘ the virtue, wisdom and word of God ; that he is in heaven ;
 ‘ and that he shall come again to be our judge, &c. Neither
 ‘ will these devils, in our presence, deny themselves to be
 ‘ unclean spirits, and damned for their wickedness ; and that
 ‘ they expect his horrible judgment, professing also that
 ‘ they do fear Christ in God, and God in Christ ; and that
 ‘ they are made subject unto his servants.’

Hitherto are the words of Tertullian, containing, as I have said, a most confident challenge ; and that upon the lives and blood of all Christians, to make trial of their power in controlling those spirits, which the Romans, and other Gentiles adored as their Gods. Which offer, seeing it was made and exhibited to the persecutors, themselves, then living in Rome, well may we be assured, that the enemy would never have omitted so notorious an advantage, if, by former experience, he had not been persuaded, that the joining therein would have turned, and redounded to his own confusion.

And this puissant authority of Jesus imparted to Christians, extended itself so far, that not only *The won-*
 their words and commands, but even their very *derful au-*
 presence, did shut the mouths, and drive to fear *thority of*
 these miserable spirits. So Lactantius shows,* *Christians*
 that in his days, among many other examples of *over spi-*
 this thing, a silly servant man, that was a Christian, fol-

* Lact. 1. 4. div. Instit. cap. 16.

lowing his master into a certain temple of idols; the Gods cried out, that nothing could well be done, as long as that Christian was in presence. The like records Eusebius* of Dioclesian the emperor, who going to Apollo for an oracle, received answer: *That the just men were cause that he could say nothing.* Which just men, Apollo's priest interpreted, to be meant ironically of Christians, and thereupon Dioclesian began his most cruel, and fierce persecution in Eusebius's days. Sozomenus† also writes, that Julian the apostate, endeavouring, with many sacrifices and conjurations to draw an answer from Apollo Daphnæus, in a famous place called Daphne, in the suburbs of Antioch; understood at last by the oracle; that the bones of St. Babylas the martyr which lay near to that place, were the impediment why that God could not speak. And thereupon, Julian presently caused the same body to be removed. And finally, hence it proceeded, that in all sacrifices, conjurations, and other mysteries of the Gentiles, there was brought in that phrase, recorded by scoffing Lucian:‡ *Exeant Christiani*: let Christians depart: for while they were present, nothing could be well accomplished.

To conclude, the Pagan Porphyry,§ that, of all others, most earnestly endeavoured to impugn, and disgrace us Christians, and to hold up the honour of his enfeebled idols: yet, discoursing of the great plague, that raged most furiously in the city of Messina in Sicily, where he dwelt; gives this reason why Æsculapius the God of physick, much adored in that place, was not able to help them. ‘It is no marvel, (says he) if this city so many years be vexed with the plague; seeing that both Æsculapius, and all other Gods be now departed from it, by the coming of Christians. For since men have begun to worship this Jesus, we could never obtain any prophet by our God.’ Thus much confessed this patron of paganism, concerning the overthrow, that his Gods have received by Jesus being honoured. Which though he spoke with a malicious mind, to bring Christians in hatred and persecution thereby; yet is the confession notable;

* Euseb. 1. 5. de præp. Evang. † Sozem. 1. 3. hist. c. 18. ‡ Lucian in Alex. § Porphy. 1. 1. con. Christ. apud. Eus. 1. 5. c. 1. de præp. Evang.

confirms that story, which Plutarch in his forenamed book does report ; that in the latter years of Tiberius's reign, a strange and exceeding horrible clamor, with hideous cries, screeches, and howlings, was heard by many in the Grecian sea, complaining that the great God PAN was now departed. And this, Plutarch,* that was a Gentile, affirms to have been alledged, and proved before the emperor Tiberius ; who marvelled greatly ; and could not, by all his divines and sooth-sayers, whom he called to that consultation, gather out any reasonable meaning of this wonderful accident. But we Christians, comparing the time wherein it happened, unto the time of Jesus's death and passion ; and finding the same fully to agree, may more than probably persuade ourselves, that by the death of their great God PAN, which signifies ALL, was imported the ruin and utter overthrow of all the wicked spirits, and idols upon earth.

*A pretty
story of
Plutarch.*

And thus has the deity of Jesus been declared and proved by his omnipotent power, in subduing infernal enemies. Now remains it for us to make manifest the same, by his like power and divine justice, showed upon divers of his enemies here on earth : whose greatest punishment, though, for the most part, he reserves for the life to come ; yet sometimes, for manifestation of his omnipotency, as especially it was convenient in those first days of his appearance in the world, he chastises them also, even here on earth, in the eye and sight of all men. So we read of the most infamous and miserable death of Herod the first, surnamed Ascalonita :† who, after his persecution of Christ in his infancy, and the slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem for his sake ; was wearied out by a loathsome life, in fear and horror of his own wife and children ; whom after he had most cruelly murdered, was forced also to despair through his unspeakable vexations, griefs, and torments, to offer his hand to his own destruction ; if he had not been staid by friends, that stood about him.

*The sixth
consideration. The
punishment of
enemies.*

I.
Herod Ascalonita.

After him, Archelaus his eldest son,‡ that was a terror

* Plutarch. in defectu Oracul. † Joseph 1. 17. antiq. c. 10. and lib. 1 de bel. Jud. cap. 21. ‡ Joseph. 1. 17. antiq. c. 15. 1, 2. de bel. Jud. c. 6.

II. to St. Joseph, at his return from Egypt, fell also,
Archelaus. by God's justice into marvellous calamities. For
 first, being left as king by his father ; Augustus
 would not allow or ratify that succession ; but of a king,
 made him a tetrarch ; assigning to him only the fourth part of
 that dominion, which his father had before. And then again,
 after nine years space, took that away in like manner, with
 the greatest dishonour he could devise, seizing upon all his
 treasure and riches, by way of confiscation ; and con-
 demned his person to perpetual banishment ; where he died
 most miserably at Vienne in France.

Not long after this the second son of Herod
 III. the first, named Herod Antipas, tetrarch of
Herod Galilee,* who put St. John Baptist to death, and
Antipas. scorned Jesus before his passion (whereat both
 himself and Herodias his concubine were present) was de-
 posed by Caius the emperor, being accused by Agrippa
 his nearest kinsman, and most contumeliously sent into exile
 first to Lyons in France ; and after that to the most desert
 and uninhabitable place of Spain ; where he met with
 Herodias, wandered up and down in extreme calamity, as
 long as they lived ; and finally ended their days, abandoned
 of all men. Concerning which it is also recorded †,

IV. that the dancing daughter of Herodias, who had
Herodia's in her jollity demanded John the Baptist's head ;
daughter. being on a certain time forced to pass over a fro-
 zen river ; the ice broke, and she in her fall had her head
 cut off, by the same ice without hurting the rest of her
 body ; to the great admiration of all the lookers on.

The like event had another of Herod's family
 V. named Herod Agrippa, the accuser of the afore-
Herod named Herod the tetrarch ; who in his great glory
Agrippa. and triumph, having put to death St. James, the
 brother of St. John the Evangelist, and imprisoned St.
 Peter ; was soon after in a public assembly of princes and
 nobles at Cesarea, struck from heaven with a most horrible
 disease, whereby his body putrified, and was eaten with
 vermin ; as both St. Luke reports, *Acts* xii. and Josephus,
 confirms. ‡ And the same Josephus, with no small marvel

* Joseph. 1. 18. ant. c. 9. 1. 2. de bel. c. 8. † Niceph. 1. 1. cap. 20
 ‡ Joseph. 1. 19. antiq. c. 7. tib. 18. c. 7.

in himself, declares, that at the very time when he wrote his history, which was about seventy years after the death of Herod the first, the whole progeny and offspring, kindred and family of the said Herod, which he says was exceeding great, by reason he had nine wives together, with many children, brothers, sisters, nephews, and kinsfolks, were all extinguished in most miserable sort, and gave a testimony, says Josephus, to the world, of the most vain confidence, that men do put in human felicity.

*The stock
of Herod
soon extin-
guished.*

And as the punishment lighted openly upon Jesus's professed enemies in Jewry; so escaped not also the Romans their chastisement; I mean such as especially had their hands in persecution of him, or of his followers after him. For first, of Pontius Pilate, that gave sentence of death against him, we read,* that after great disgrace received in Jewry, he was sent home into Italy, and there, by manifold disfavours showed unto him by the emperor his master, fell into such despair, that he slew himself with his own hands.

*The pun-
ishment of
Romans.*

VI.
Pilate.

And secondly, of the very emperors themselves, who lived from Tiberius, under whom Jesus suffered; unto Constantine the great, under whom the Christian religion took dominion over the world, which contained the space of three hundred years, very few or none escaped the manifest scourges of God's dreadful justice showed upon them, at the ending of their days. For example sake,† Tiberius, that permitted Christians to live freely, and made a law against their molestation, as before has been showed, died peaceably in his bed. But Caligula that followed him; for his contempt showed against all divine power, in making himself a God; was soon murdered by the conspiracy of his dearest friends. Nero also, who first of all others began persecution against the Christians; within a few months after he had put St. Peter and St. Paul to death in Rome, having murdered in like manner his own mother, brother wife, and master, was upon the sudden, from his glorious state and majesty, thrown down into horrible distress and

VII.
Caligula.

VIII.
Nero.

* Eutrop. 1. 7. hist, Euseb. 1. 2. c. 7. hist. † Tertul. in Apolog.

confusion, in the sight of all men : as being condemned by the senate to have his head thrust into a pillory, and there most ignominiously to be whipped to death ; was constrained, for avoiding the execution of that terrible sentence, to massacre himself with his own hands, by the assistance of such as were dearest unto him.

The like may be showed in the tragical ends
 IX. of Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Domitian, Commodus,
Many emperors that died miserably. Pertinax, Julian, Macrinus, Antonius, Alexander, Maximinus, Gordianus, Aurelianus, Decius, Gallus, Volussianus, Æmilianus, Valerianus, Gallienus, Caius, Carinus, Maximianus, Maxentius, Licinius, and others, whose miserable deaths, a nobleman and counsellor,* near a thousand years past, did gather against Zosimus a heathen writer, to show thereby the powerful hand of Jesus upon his enemies ; adding further, that since the time of Constantine, whilst emperors have been Christians, few or no such examples can be showed, except it be upon Julian the apostate, Valens the Arian heretic, or some other of like detestable notorious wickedness. And thus much of particular men chastised by Jesus.

But if we desire to have a full example of his
 X. justice upon a whole nation together ; let us con-
The chastisement of Jerusalem. And of the Jewish people. sider what befel Jerusalem and the people of Jewry, for their barbarous cruelty passed upon him, in his death and passion. And truly if we believe Josephus and Philo,† the Jewish historiographers (who lived either with Christ, or immediately after him) it can be hardly expressed by the tongue or pen of man, what insufferable calamities and miseries were inflicted on that people, presently after the ascension of Jesus, by Pilate their governor, under Tiberius the emperor ; and then again by Petronius, under Caligula ; and after that by Cumanus, under Claudius ; and lastly, by Festus and Albinus, under Nero. Through whose cruelties that nation was forced finally to rebel and take arms against the Roman empire, which was the cause of their utter ruin and extirpation by Titus and Vespasian. At that

* Evagrius Scholast. 1. 3. hist. c. 41. † Joseph. 1. 19. ant. 1, 2 and 3. de bel. Judai. Philo. in Flacce and 1, 2. q. log. Cornel. Tac. 1, 12.

time, besides the overthrow of their city, burning of their temple, and other infinite distresses, which Josephus an eye witness protests, that no speech or human discourse can declare ; the same author records eleven hundred thousand persons to have been slain, and fourscore and seventeen thousand taken alive ; who were either put to death afterwards in public triumphs, or sold openly for bond slaves into all the world.

And in this universal calamity of the Jewish nation, being the most notorious and grievous that ever happened to nation or people, before or after them (for the Romans never practised the like upon others,) it is singularly to be observed, that in the same time and place, in which they had put Jesus to death before ; that is, in the feast of their Paschal, when their whole nation was assembled at Jerusalem from all parts, provinces, and countries of the earth ; they received this their most piteous subversion, and that by the hands of the Roman Cæsars, to whom, by public cry, they had appealed from Jesus but a little before. Yea, further it is to be observed and noted, that as they apprehended Jesus, and made the entrance to his passion upon the mount Olivet : so Titus, as Josephus writes,* upon the same mount planted his first siege for their final destruction. And as they led Jesus from Caiphas to Pilate, afflicting him in their presence : so now were themselves led up and down from John to Simon (two tyrants that had usurped dominion within the city) and were scourged and tormented before their tribunal seats.† Again as they had caused Jesus to be scoffed, beaten, and villainously treated by the soldiers, in Pilate's palace, so were now their own principal rulers and noblemen (as Josephus notes) most scornfully abused, beaten, and crucified by the same soldiers. Which latter point of crucifying, or villainous putting to death upon the cross, was begun to be practised by the Romans, upon the Jewish gentry, immediately after Christ's death, and not before. And now at this time of the war, Josephus affirms‡, ' that in some one day, five hundred of his nation were taken

*How
Christ's
death was
punished,
with like
circum-
stances
upon the
Jews.*

* Joseph. 1. 5. de bel. c. 8. † Lib. c. 27. ‡ Lib. 5. de bel. c. 28.

‘and put to this opprobrious kind of punishment ; inso-
 ‘much, that for the great multitude, said he, *Nec locus*
 ‘*sufficerit Crucibus, nec Cruces corporibus* : that is,
 ‘neither the place was sufficient to contain so many cross-
 ‘es (as the Romans set up) nor the crosses sufficient to
 ‘sustain so many bodies, as they murdered by that tor-
 ‘ment.’

This dreadful and unspeakable misery, fell upon the
 Jews, about forty years after Jesus’s ascension, when
 they had showed themselves most obstinate and obdurate
 against his doctrine, delivered unto them, not only by him-
 self, but also by his Disciples ; of which Disciples they
 had slain Saint Stephen and Saint James ; and had driven
 into banishment both Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and
 others that had preached unto them. To which latter two
 Apostles, (I mean Saint Peter and Saint Paul) our Saviour
 Jesus appeared a little before their martyrdom in Rome,
 (as Lactantius* writes) and showed that within three or
 four years after their death, he was to take re-

*A marvel-
 lous provi-
 dence of
 God for
 delivering
 the Chris-
 tians that
 were in Je-
 rusalem at
 the time
 of the de-
 struction.*

venge upon their nation, by the utter destruction
 of Jerusalem, and of that generation. Which
 secret advice, the said Lactantius affirms, that
 Peter and Paul revealed to other Christians in
 Jewry ; whereby it came to pass, (as Eusebius
 also and other authors do mention†) that all the
 Christians, living in Jerusalem, departed thence,
 not long before the siege began, to a certain town
 named Pella beyond Jordan, which was assigned
 unto them for that purpose, by Jesus himself, for
 that it being in the dominion of Agrippa (who
 stood with the Romans) it remained in peace and safety,
 while all Jewry besides was brought to desolation.

This was the providence of God for the pun-
 ishment of the Jews at that time. And ever
 after, their state declined from worse to worse ;
 and their miseries daily multiplied throughout the
 world. Whereof he that will see a very lament-
 able narration ; let him read but the last book
 only of Josephus’s history *de bello Judaico*,
 wherein is reported, besides other things, that after the

*The Jew-
 ish mise-
 ries after
 the destruc-
 tion of Je-
 rusalem.*

* Lib. 4. divin. Inst. c. 21. † Euseb. 1. 3. cap. 5. Niceph. 3.

war was ended, and all public slaughter ceased: Titus sent sixty thousand Jews, as a present to his father at Rome, there to be put to death in divers and sundry manners. Others he applied to be spectacles for pastime to the Romans, that were present with him; whereof Josephus says,* that he saw with his own eyes, two thousand and five hundred murdered and consumed in one day, by fight and combat among themselves, and with wild beasts at the emperor's appointment. Others were assigned in Antioch and other great cities, to serve for faggots in their famous bonfires at times of triumph. Others were sold to be bond slaves; others condemned to dig and hew stones forever. And this was the end of that war and desolation.

After this again, under Trajan the emperor, there were such infinite numbers of Jews slain and made away by Marcus Turbo in Africa, and Lucius Quintis in the East, that all the histories agree, that it is wonderful to express the multitude, but yet it is more wonderful, what the same historians do report;† that in the eighteenth year of Adrian the emperor, one Julius Severus being sent, to extinguish all the remnant of the Jewish generation; destroyed in a small time nine hundred and eighty towns and villages, within that country, and slew five hundred and four score thousand of that blood and nation in one day: at which time he beat down the city of Jerusalem in such sort, as he left not one stone standing upon another of their ancient buildings: but caused some part thereof to be re-edified again, and inhabited only by Gentiles. He changed the name of the city, and called it ‡ *Ælia*, after the emperor's name. He drove the progeny and offspring of the Jews from off all those countries, with a perpetual law confirmed by the emperor, that they should never return; no, not so much as look back from any high or eminent place, to that country again. And this was done to that Jewish nation by the Roman emperors, for accomplishing that demand, which their principal elders had made, not long before, to Pilate the Roman magistrate, concerning Jesus's most injurious

*Th final
desolation
of the
Jewish
nation.*

* Joseph. 1. 7. de bel. c. 29 and 21. † Oros. 7. c. 13. Ariston Pellæus in hist. Euseb. 1. 4. c. 5. Niceph. 1. 3. c. 24. ‡ The Emperor's name was *Ælius Adrianus*.

death ; crying out with one consent and voice : to wit
Matt. xxvii. ‘ His blood be upon us, and upon our chil-
 dren.’

And herein also (I mean in the most wonder-
The se- ful and notorious chastisement, or rather reprobation, of this Jewish people, which of all the
venth con- sideration, of this Jewish people, which of all the
The fulfill- world was God’s peculiar before) is set out unto
ing of Je- us, as it were in a glass the seventh and last point
sus’s pro- which we mentioned in the beginning of this
phesies. Section: to wit, the fulfilling of such speeches

and prophecies, as Jesus uttered when he was upon earth :
 as namely at one time, after a long and vehement com-
 mination, made to the scribes, pharisees, and principal men
 of that nation, (in which he repeated eight several times
 the dreadful threat, *wo*) he concludes finally, *Matt. xxiii.*
 that all the just blood that hath been shed upon the
 earth, from the blood of Abel the just (the first Martyr)
 should be revenged upon that generation. And in the same
 place, he menaces the populous city of Jerusalem, that it
 should be made desert. And in another place, he assures
 them, *Luke xxi.* that one stone should not be left standing
 thereof upon another. And yet further he pronounced upon
 the same city, these words ; *Luke xix.* ‘ The days shall come
 ‘ upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee,
 ‘ and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side,
 ‘ and shall beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children
 ‘ who are in thee,’ And yet more particularly, he foretells the
 very signs, whereby his disciples should perceive when
 the time was come indeed, using this speech unto them ;
Luke xxi. ‘ When you shall see Jerusalem compassed
 ‘ about with an army : then know that the desolation there-
 of is at hand ;—for these are the days of vengeance,
 ‘ that all things may be fulfilled that are written. For
 ‘ there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon
 ‘ this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword :
 ‘ and shall be led away captives into all nations. And Je-
 ‘ rusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles ; till the
 ‘ times of the nations be fulfilled.’

This Jesus foretold of the misery that was to
The cir- fall upon Jerusalem, and upon that people,
cumstances by the Romans, and other Gentiles, when
of the time the Jews seemed to be most in security and
when Je- greatest amity with the Romans (as also they
sus spoke
his words.

were, when the same things were written) and consequently, at that time, they might seem in all human reason, to have more cause than ever before to misdoubt such calamities. And yet how certain and assured foreknowledge, and as it were most sensible forefeeling, Jesus, had of these miseries, he declared, not only by these express words, and by their event ; but also by those piteous tears, he shed upon sight and consideration of Jerusalem ; and by the lamentable speech he used to the women of that city, who wept for him at his passion ; persuading them, *Luke xxiii.* to weep rather for themselves, and for their children, in respect of the miseries to follow, than for him. *and when they were written.*

Which words and prediction of Jesus, together with sundry other speeches, foreshowing so particularly the eminent calamities of that nation ; and as I have said, at such time, when in human appearance there could be no probability thereof, when a certain heathen chronicler and mathematician named Phlegon,* about a hundred years after Christ's departure, had diligently considered ; having seen the same also in his days most exactly fulfilled (for he was servant to Adrianus the emperor, by whose command, as has been said before, the final subversion of the Jewish nation was brought to pass) the Phlegon, I say, though a Pagan ; yet upon consideration of these events, and others that he saw, (as the extreme persecution of Christians foretold by Christ, and the like) he pronounced ; that never any man foretold things so certainly to come, or that so precisely were accomplished, as were the predictions and prophecies of Jesus. And this testimony of Phlegon, was alledged and urged for Christians, against one Celsus a heathen philosopher, and Epicure, by the famous learned Origen,† even the next age after it was written by the author ; so that of the truth of this allegation, there can be no doubt or question at all. *The testimony of a heathen for the fulfilling of Christ's prophecies.*

And now although these predictions and prophecies, concerning the punishment and reprobation of the Jews, fulfilled so evidently in the sight of all the world, might be a sufficient demonstration of Jesus's foreknowledge in affairs to come ; *Other prophecies of Jesus fulfilled to his disciples.*

* Phleg. Thrali. lib. Annal. † Orig. lib. 2 cont. Cels. sup. initium.

yet are there many other things besides foreshowed by him, which fell out as exactly, as did these : notwithstanding that by no learning, mathematical reason, or human conjecture, they were or might be foreseen. As for example : the foretelling of his own death ; the manner, time, and place thereof : as also the person that should betray him, together with his unrepentant end. The flight, fear and scandal of his disciples, though they had promised and protested the contrary. The three several denials of Peter. The particular time of his own resurrection, and ascension. The sending of the Holy Ghost ; and many other the like predictions, prophecies, and promises, to his Apostles, Disciples and Followers, who heard them uttered, and left them written before they fell out, and saw them afterwards accomplished ; and who by the falsehood thereof would have received great damage if they had not been true : to these men, I say, they were most evident proofs of Jesus's divine prescience in matters that should ensue.

Prophecies fulfilled in the sight of Gentiles. But yet because an infidel with whom only I suppose myself to deal in this place, may in these and the like things find perhaps some matter of cavil ; and say, that these prophecies of Jesus were recorded by our Evangelists

after the particulars therein prophesied were effected, and not before : and consequently, that they might be forged : I will alledge certain other events, both foretold and registered before they came to pass, and divulged by public writings in the face of all the world, when there was small appearance that ever the same might take effect. Such were the particular foretelling of the kind and manner of St. Peter's death, whilst yet he lived. The peculiar and different manner of St. John the Evangelist's ending from the rest of the Apostles. The prerogative given to Peter above the rest, that his faith and chair should never fail, which we see miraculously verified even unto this day ; the succession of all other Apostles having failed ; and his not. The foreshowing and describing to his Disciples the most extreme and cruel persecutions that should ensue unto Christians for his sake ; a thing at that time not probable in reason, for the Romans permitted the exercise of all kinds of Religion ; and that, notwithstanding all these pressures and intolerable afflictions, his faithful followers should not shrink, but hold out, and daily increase in zeal, fortitude,

and number ; and finally, should atchieve the victory and conquest of all the world : a thing much more unlikely at that day, and so far surpassing all human probability, that no capacities, reason, or conceit of man could reach or attain the foresight thereof.

And with this we will conclude our third and last part of the general division set down in the beginning, concerning the grounds and proof of Christian religion.

SECT. V.—*The Conclusion.*

By all that has hitherto been said, we have declared and made manifest unto thee, gentle reader, three things of great importance.

*The sum
of the for-
mer four
Sections*

First, that from the beginning and creation of the world, there has been promised in all times and ages, a Messias or Saviour of mankind : in whom. and by whom all nations should be blessed ; as also, that the particular time, manner and circumstance of his coming, together with the quality of his person, purpose doctrine, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, were in like manner, by the Prophets of God most evidently fore-showed.

Secondly, that the very same particulars and special points, that were designed and set down by the said Prophets, were also fulfilled most exactly, with their circumstances, in the person and actions of Jesus our Saviour.

Thirdly, that besides the accomplishment of all the fore-said prophecies, that were given by Jesus, many signs, manifestations, and most infallible arguments of his Diety and omnipotent puissance after his ascension or departure from all human and corporal conversation in this world. By all which ways, means, arguments, and proofs, and by ten thousand more, which to the tongue or pen of man are inexplicable, the Christian's mind remains settled, and most firmly grounded in the undoubted belief of his religion : having (besides all other things, evidences, certainties, and internal comforts and assurances which are infinite) these eight demonstrative reasons and persuasions, which ensue for his more ample and abundant satisfaction therein.

*Eight
reasons.*

The prophecies. I. It is impossible so many things should be foretold so precisely, with so many particularities in so many ages, by so different persons all of sanctity, with so great concord, consent and unity, and that so long beforehand; but by the spirit of God, alone, that only has foreknowledge of future events.

The fulfilling. II. It could not possibly be, that so many things so difficult and strange with all their particularities and circumstances, should be so exactly and precisely fulfilled; but in him alone, of whom they were so truly meant.

God's assistance. III. It can be no ways imagined, that God would ever have concurred with Jesus's doings, or assisted him above all course of nature, with so abundant miracles, as the Gentiles do confess that he wrought; if he had been a seducer, or taken upon him to set forth a false doctrine.

Jesus's doctrine. IV. If Jesus had intended to deceive the world; he would never would have proposed a doctrine so difficult and repugnant to all sensuality: but rather would have taught things pleasant and grateful to man's voluptuous delight, as Mahomet after him. Neither could the nature of man, have ever so effectuously embraced such austerity; without the assistance of some divine and supernatural power.

Jesus's manner of teaching. V. Jesus being poorly born and unlearned, as by his adversaries confession, does appear; and in such an age, and time, when all worldly learning was in a most flourishing condition; he could never possibly, but by divine power, have attained to such exquisite knowledge of all kind of learning, as to be able to decide all the doubts and controversies of philosophers before him, as he did; laying down more plainly, distinctly, and perspicuously, the pith of all human and divine learning within the compass of three years teaching [and that to auditors of great simplicity] then did all the sages of the world, until that day; insomuch, that even then, the most unlearned Christian of that time, could say more in certainty of truth, concerning the knowledge of God, the creation of the world, the end of man, the reward of virtue, the punishment of vice, the immorality of our soul and its state after this life, and in such other high points and mysteries of true philosophy; than could the most famous and learn-

ed of all gentiles that had for so many ages before beaten their brains in contention about the same.

VI. If Jesus had not meant plainly and sincerely in all his doings according as he professed, he would never have taken so severe a course of life to himself; neither would he have refused all temporal dignities and advancements as he did; he would never have chosen to die so opprobriously in the sight of all men; nor made election of Apostles and Disciples so poor and contemptible in the world; nor, if he had, would ever worldly men have followed him in so great multitudes, with so great fervour, zeal, constancy and perseverance unto death.

*Jesus's
life and
manner
of pro-
ceeding.*

VII. We see that the first beginners and founders of Christian religion left by Jesus were a multitude of simple and unskilful persons, unapt to deceive or devise any thing of themselves. They began against all probability of human reason; they went forward against the stream and strength of all the world; they continued and increased above human possibility; they persevered in insufferable torments and afflictions; they wrought miracles above the reach and compass of man's ability; they overthrew man's idolatry that then possessed the world; and confounded all infernal powers, by only the name and virtue of their master: they saw the prophecies of Jesus fulfilled, and all his divine speeches and predictions come to pass; they saw the punishment of their enemies and chief impugnors to fall upon them in their days: they saw every day whole provinces, countries, and kingdoms converted to their faith; and finally, the whole Roman empire and world besides, to subject itself to the law, obedience, and gospel of their master.

*The begin-
ners and
first pub-
lishers of
Christian
religion.*

VIII. Among all other reasons and arguments this may be one most manifest unto us; that whereas by any testimonies and express prophecies of the old testament, it is affirmed, that the people of Israel should abandon, persecute, and put to death the true Messias at his coming, as before has been showed; and for that fact, should itself be abandoned by God, and brought to ruin and dispersion over all the world, wherein, according to the words of Hosea: *Hosea* iii. 'They shall sit many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without altar, and without ephod, and

*The pre-
sent state
of the
Jews.*

‘ without tneraphim ; and after this shall return and seek ‘ the Lord their God—in the last days,’ we see in this age the very same particularities fulfilled in that nation, and so to have continued now for these fifteen hundred years : that is, we see the Jewish people abandoned and afflicted above all nations of the world ; dispersed in servility throughout all corners of other nations : without dignity or reputation ; without king, prince, or commonwealth of themselves. prohibited by princes, both Christians and others, to make their sacrifices where they inhabit ; deprived of all means to attain to knowledge in good literature, whereby daily they fall into more gross ignorance and absurdities against common reason in their latter doctrine, than did the most barbarous infidels that ever were ; having lost all sense and feeling in spiritual affairs ; all knowledge and understanding in celestial things for the life to come ; having among them no prophet, no grave teacher, no man directed by God’s holy spirit ; and finally, as men forlorn, and filled with all kind of misery, do, both by their inward, and external calamities, preach, denounce, and testify to the world, that Jesus, whom they crucified, was the only true Messiah and Saviour of mankind ; and that his blood as they required, lies heavily upon their generation for ever.

The conclusion of the chapter, with an admonishment.

Wherefore to conclude this whole discourse and treatise of the proofs and evidence of our christian religion : seeing that by so manifold and invincible demonstrations it has been declared and laid before our eyes, that Jesus is the only true Saviour and Redeemer of the world ; and consequently, that his service and religion is the only way and means to please Almighty God, and to attain everlasting happiness ; there remains now to consider, that the same Jesus, who

Jesus shall also be a judge.

by so many prophets was promised to be a Saviour, was foretold by the self-same prophets, that he should be a judge and examiner of all our actions. Which latter point, no prophet that has foreshowed his coming, has omitted to inculcate seriously unto us : no, not the Sibyls themselves, who in every place where they describe the most gracious coming of the Virgin’s Son, do also annex there unto his dreadful appearance at the day of judgment ; especially in those

famous acrostic verses,* whereof there has been so much mention before ; the whole discourse upon the words, 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Saviour and Cross,' containing nothing else, but a large and ample description of his most terrible coming in fire, and flame, and conflagration of the world at that dreadful day, to take an account of all men's words, actions, and thoughts.

To which description of these Pagan prophets, the whole tenor and context of the old Bible is consonant, foreshowing everywhere the dreadful majesty, terror, and severity of the Messias at that day.† The New Testament also, which tends wholly to comfort and solace mankind, and has the name of Evangel, in respect of joyful news which it brought to the world, omits not to put us continually in mind of this point.‡ And to that end, both Jesus himself, amidst all his sweet and comfortable speeches with his disciples, did admonish them often of this last day : and his apostles, evangelists, and disciples after him, repeated, iterated, and urged this important consideration in all their words and writings.

Wherefore, as by the name and thought of a Saviour, we are greatly stirred up to joy, alacrity, confidence, and consolation; so by this admonishment of God's saints, and of Jesus himself, that he is to be our judge, and severe examiner of all the minutes and moments of our life, we are to conceive just fear and dread of this his second coming. And as by the whole former treatise we have been instructed, that the only way to salvation is by the profession of Jesus's religion; so by this account, that shall be demanded at our hands the last day, by the author and first institutor of this religion we are taught, that unless we be true christians indeed, and do perform such duties as this law and religion prescribes unto us; so far shall we be from receiving any benefit by the name; that our judgment will be more grievous, and our final calamity more intolerable. For which cause, I would, in sincere charity, exhort every man, that by the former discourse has received

An illustration from the premises with an exhortation. —

* Apud Euseb. lib. 4. in vit. Const. in Sibyl. † 1. Reg. 2. Psal. 95. Isai. 2, 13. 26, 27, 30. Jer. 30. Dan. 7. Sopho. 1. Malac 4. ‡ Matt. 12, 13. 15, 21, 25. Mark 13. Luke 17. Rom. 2. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 2. Cor. 5. 1 Thes. 4. 5, 2. Thes. 1. 1 Tim. 2. 2 Pet. 5. 3. Heb. 9. Jude. 15. Apoc. 1.

any light, and is confirmed in his judgment concerning the truth of the Christian religion, to employ his whole endeavours, for the attaining of the fruit and benefit thereof; which is, by being a true and real Christian; for Christ himself foresignified, that many should take the name without profiting by their profession. And to the end each man may the better know to conjecture of himself, whether he be in the right way or no, and whether he perform indeed the duty required of a true Christian; I have thought convenient to adjoin this chapter next following of that matter; and therein to declare the particular points belonging to that profession, Which being known, it will be easy for every one, that is not over partial or wilfully bent to deceive himself, to discern his own state; and the course and way that he hold. Which is a high point of wisdom for all men to do while they have time; lest at the latter day, we having passed over our lives in the bare name only of christianity, without the substance, do find ourselves in the number of those most unfortunate people, who shall cry Lord! Lord! and receive no comfort by that confession.

CHAPTER V.

How the end whereunto man was created, may be attained by us, and the duties belonging thereunto. With a declaration of the two general parts whereunto all those duties may be reduced, which are faith and good works.

SECT. I. *Concerning FAITH.*

As in human learning and sciences of this world, after having shown the end whereunto they tend, and are directed; the next point is to declare the means whereby that may be obtained: so much more, in this divine and heavenly doctrine of christian religion which concerns our soul, and everlasting salvation. Having showed before that the final end for which man was created and placed in this world, was, and is, that he should employ himself in the service of God, and thereby gain everlasting glory and felicity to himself in the next life; it follows by order of good consequence, that we should treat in this place, how a man may attain the fruit of this doctrine: that is to say, how he may come to be a true servant of God; and what duties are necessarily to be per-

*The effect
of this
Chapter.*

formed for the same : as how he may examine or make trial of himself, whether he be so indeed or not. Which examination, to speak in brief, consists principally in the consideration of these two general points, or heads, whereunto all other particulars may be reduced, to wit, faith and works; that is to say: first, whether he believes unfeignedly the total sum of documents and mysteries, left by Jesus and his disciples in the Catholic Church; and secondly, whether he performs in sincerity the rules and precepts of life, prescribed unto Christians by that doctrine, for direction of their works and actions.—So that on these two main points of christian duty, we are to bestow our whole speech in this chapter.

And for the first, how to examine the truth of our belief; it would be over tedious to lay down every particular way that might be assigned for the discussion thereof; for it would bring in the contention of all times, as well ancient as present, about controversies in christian faith, which has been impugned from age to age, by the seditious instruments of Christ's infernal enemies. And therefore, as well because of the prolixity, whereof this place is not capable, as also because I avoid of purpose, all dealing with matters of controversy within the compass of this work; I mean only at this time, for the comfort of such as are already in the right way, and for some light to others, who perhaps out of simplicity may walk awry; to set down with as great brevity as possible, some few general notes or observations for their better help in this belief.

In which great affair of our faith and belief (wherein consists as well the ground and foundation of our eternal welfare, as also the fruit and entire utility of Christ's coming into this world) it is to be considered, that God could not of his infinite wisdom (foreseeing all things, and times to come) nor ever would, of his unspeakable goodness (desiring our salvation as he does) leave us in this life without most sure, certain, and clear evidence in this matter: and consequently we must imagine that all errors committed herein, (I mean in matters of faith and belief among Christians) do proceed rather from sin, negligence, wilfulness, or inconsideration in ourselves: than either from difficulties, or doubtfulness in the means left unto us, for

*Two
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*The first
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Christians.*

discerning the same ; or from the want of God's holy assistance to that effect, if we would with humility accept thereof.

This Isaiah made plain, when he prophecied of this perspicuity ; that is of this most excellent privilege in christian religion, so many years before Christ was born. For after he had declared in divers chapters, and foretold the glorious coming of Christ in signs and miracles ; as also the multitude of Gentiles that should embrace his doctrine, together with the joy and exultation of their conversion . he foreshows presently the wonderful providence of God in providing also for christians, so manifest a way of direction for their faith and religion that the most simple and unlearned man in the world should not be able, but out of wilfulness, to go astray therein. His words are these directed to the Gentiles : *Isaiah xxxv.* ' Take courage, and ' fear not, God himself will come and will save you. ' Then ' shall the eyes of the blind be opened : and the ears of ' the deaf shall be unstopped. And a path and way shall ' be there : and it shall be called* the holy way : and this ' shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall err ' therein.

By which words we see that among other rare benefits that Christ's people were to receive by his coming, this should be one, and not the least : that after his holy doctrine was once published and received, it should not be easy even for the weakest in capacity or learning [whom Isaiah here notes by the names of fools] to run awry in matters of their belief ; so plain, clear, and evident, should the way, for trial thereof be made.

Hence it is that St. Paul pronounces so peremptorily of a contentious and heretical man : *Titus iii.* ' That he is ' condemned by the testimony of his own judgment or conscience ;' for that he has abandoned this common, direct, and public way, which all men might see ; and has devised particular paths and turnings to himself. Hence it is, that the ancient fathers of Christ's primitive church,† disputing against the same kind of people, maintained always that their error was out of malice, and wilful blind-

* The direct holy way of the Catholic Church. † See St. Aug. tract. i. in Epist. Joan. & 1. de un. Eccl. cont. Petil. c. 14.

ness, and not out of ignorance; applying those words of prophecy unto them; *Psalm xxx.* ‘They that saw me, fled from me. That is, (says St. Augustine*) they who ‘saw and beheld the Catholic Church of Christ;’ [which is the plain way denoted by Isaiah, *Isaiah ii.* and the most eminent mountain described by Daniel, *Dan. ii.* as also by Isaiah himself in another place: and expounded by Christ in St. Matthew’s gospel, *Mat. v.* this church, says he, wicked heretics beholding [for no man can behold the sight thereof but he that most obstinately will shut his eyes] yet for hatred and malice they run out of the same: and do rise up heresies and schisms against the unity thereof.

Thus much says this holy doctor: by whose discourse we may perceive, that the plain and direct way mentioned by Isaiah, where no simple or ignorant man can err, is the general body of Christ’s visible church upon earth, planted by his apostles throughout all countries and nations; and continuing by succession unto the world’s end. In which church whosoever remains, and believes all things that are taught therein; cannot possibly fall into error of faith.

*The way
of avoid-
ing error
in belief.*

For this church or universal body is guided by Christ’s spirit, who is the head thereof; and so no ways subject or within the compass of error. For which cause St. Paul names it: 1 *Tim. iii.* ‘The pillar and ground of the truth.’ And the same church is so manifest and evident (and shall be so to the world’s end, as the same learned doctor,† and others his equals do prove) that it is more easy to find it out, than it is to see the sun or moon, when it shines brightest; or to behold the greatest hill or mountain in the world. For as St. Augustine’s words are: ‘Though particular ‘hills in one country, may be unknown in another; as ‘Olympus in Greece, may be unknown in Africa; and ‘the mountain Giddaba of Africa, may be unknown in ‘Greece: yet, [says this holy father] a mountain that ‘passes throughout all countries, and fills up the whole ‘world, as Daniel prophesied Christ’s church should do, ‘*Dan. ii.* cannot but be apparent to the sight of all men:

* Concion. 2. in Ps. 30. † Aug. tract. 1. in epist. Joan. Chri. Hom. 4. de verb. Isa vidi Dom.

and consequently must needs be known by all men, but 'only such as willingly do shut their eyes not to see it.'

A declaration of the Fathers argument. For declaration of which reason, argument, and discourse of holy fathers (being also the discourse of Christ himself in the gospel, when he remits men to the visible church, that is placed on a hill) it is to be noted, that in the time from Christ's ascension, until the thirteenth year of Nero's reign, who first of the Roman emperors, began open persecution against the proceedings of Christians, and put to death St. Peter and St. Paul: in this time, I say of toleration under the Roman empire, which continued the space of thirty-six years, Christ's apostles and disciples had preached and planted one uniform gospel, throughout all the world; as both by their acts have recorded; as also by the peculiar testimony of St. Paul to the Romans, *Rom. i.* may appear. Which thing being done most miraculously, by the power and virtue of their master; and also by bishops, pastors, and other governors, ordained in every church, and country, for guiding and directing the same, by themselves, and their successors to the world's end: this, I say, being once brought to pass, and the little stone that was cut out of a hill without hands, being now made a huge mountain, that had spread itself over the whole face of the earth, according to Daniel's prophecy: *Dan. ii.* then those holy and sage apostles, for preventing all new doctrine and false errors, that might afterwards arise as (by revelation from Jesus, they understood there would do many) most earnestly exhorted, and with all possible vehemency called upon the people, to stand fast in the documents and traditions then received; to hold firmly the faith and doctrine already delivered, as a Depositum and treasure committed to be safely kept until the last day. And above all other things, they most diligently forewarned them, to beware of new fangled teachers, whom they called heretics; who should break from the unity of this universal body, already made and knit together; and should devise new glosses, expositions, and interpretations of scripture; bring in new senses, doctrine, opinions, and divisions, to the renting of God's church and city now built, and to the perdition of infinite souls.*

*1 Cor. 16. Gal. 5. 2 Thes. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 20. 2 Tim. 1 Matt. 7. 2 Tim. 2, 3. Tit. 3. 2 Thes. 3. 2 Joan. 7. Apoc. 2.

For discerning of which kind of most pernicious people (as St. Augustine* and other holy fathers note) and for more perfect distinction between them and true christians; the said apostles made use of the name of Catholic; and set down in their common creed, that clause or article: 'I believe the holy Catholic church.' By which word Catholic, that signifies universal they gave to understand to all posterity, that whatsoever doctrine, or opinion should be raised afterwards among Christians, disagreeing from the general consent, doctrine and tradition of the universal church; was to be reputed as error and heresy, and utterly to be rejected.— And that the only anchor, stay, and security of a christian's mind, in matters of belief for his salvation, was to be a Catholic: that is,† as all ancient fathers do interpret, one, who laying aside all particular opinions and imaginations, both of himself and others, does subject his judgment to the determination of Christ's universal, visible and known church upon earth; embracing whatsoever that believes; and abandoning whatsoever that church rejects. — And this is the plain, direct, sure, and infallible way among Christians, whereof we spoke out of Isaiah, and other prophets and saints of God before wherein no man can err, though never so simple; but only out of wilful and obstinate malice; which is declared in the following manner.

*The first
use of the
name Ca-
tholics.*

The gospel of Christ, being once preached, and received uniformly over all the world, and churches of Christianity erected throughout all countries, provinces, and nations in the apostles time, as has been said: and it is to be considered that this universal church, body, or kingdom, so gathered, founded, and established, was to continue visibly; not for one or two ages, but unto the world's end. For so it was foreshowed and promised most perspicuously by Daniel, when he, foretelling the four great monarchies, that after him should ensue, adjoins these evident words of the church and kingdom of Christ: *Dan ii.* 'In the days of those kingdoms, the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and his kingdom shall not be delivered up to another peo-

*He that
hearkens
to the
Church
cannot be
deceived.*

* Aug. 1. de vera rel † Sec Hierom cont. Luciferian ‡ Vinc Lirin.
1. cont. heres. Aug. cont. ep. Man.

‘ple.’ By which last words, as also by divers promises of Christ himself in the gospel, we have ascertained, that the very same visible congregation, church, body, commonwealth, government, and kingdom, which was established by the apostles in their time, shall endure, and continue by succession of followers, unto the world’s end ; neither shall it pass over, or be delivered to any other people : that is, no new teachers of latter doctrine dissenting from the first, shall ever finally prevail against it. Which prophecy, to have been fulfilled from that day unto this, is made evident and most apparent, by the records of all ages ; wherein though divers errors and heresies have sprung up, and made great blustering and disturbance for a time ; yct they have been repressed and beaten down again by the same church, and her visible pillars, pastors and doctors.

For example ; in the first age there rose up certain seditious fellows among the Jews making some contention about their ceremonies ; as also did Simon Magus, Nicolaus, Cerinthius, Ebion, and Menander that were heretics.—Against whom, besides the apostles, their disciples St.

*No heresy
ever pre-
vailed a-
gainst the
Church.*

Martialis, St. Dionysius Areopagita, Ignatius, Polycarpus, and others, stood in defence of that, which was published before. In the second age, rose up Basilides, Cerdon, Marcion, Valentius, Tacianus, Apelles, Montanus, and divers others ; against whom stood Justin Martyr, Dionysius bishop of Corinth, Irenæus, Clemens, Alexandrinus, Tertullian, and their equals. And so downwards from age to age, unto our days, whatsoever heresy, or different opinion has been raised, contrary to the general consent of this universal body ; it has been checked and controlled by the watchmen, pastors, and chief governors of this body. And finally, has been condemned and anathematized by their general assemblies, and councils, gathered from time to time, as occasion served, in all parts of the world.

*A secure
way.*

Whereby it is most manifest, that he, who relies upon this general consent of Christ’s Church on earth, and adheres to nothing against the judgment of the same, cannot possibly err in matters of belief ; but walks in that secure, and infallible path, wherein Isaiah says : *Isaiah xxxv.* that fools shall not err therein.

Wherefore, to conclude this first part of our

The conclusion of the first part

present speech, concerning the trial of our faith and belief: he that is a true Catholic, and holds himself within the obedience of this general and universal church, which has descended by succession from Christ and his Apostles: that is, (as Vincentius said,* eleven hundred years ago, in his most excellent treatise against innovations of heretics) he that loves the church and body of Jesus Christ so much, as to prefer nothing in the world before the Catholic and universal doctrine thereof: not any private man's authority, love, wit, or eloquence, not reasons of nature, or pretence of scripture, against that, which before him was believed by all men; he that follows universality, antiquity, and consent in his belief; and stands firmly to that faith, which has been held in all places, in all seasons, and that by all, or the most part of bishops, priests, and doctors, of Christianity: he that can say with St. Augustine,† that he truly follows the universal church, which had her beginning by the entering in of nations, got authority by miracles, was increased by charity, and established by continuance, which has her succession of bishops from the chair of Peter until our time: that Church which is known in the world by the name of Catholic, not only to her friends, but also among her enemies (for even heretics in common speech do term her so, having no other means to distinguish themselves and their followers from her, but by calling themselves Reformers, Illuminates, Unspotted Brethren, and such other names that are different from Catholic.) He that protests with St. Jerom‡, that he does abhor all sects and names of particular men as Marcionists, Montanists, Valentinians, and the like; that does confess sincerely with blessed Cyprian,§ that one priest for the time is to be obeyed by all Christians, as judge, representing Christ, according to the ordinance of God: he that is modest, quiet, sober, void of contention, and obedient as St. Paul describes a true and good Catholic: that is humble in his own conceit, 'and agreeing to humble things,' firm in faith, and not variable, 'nor delighted in 'new doctrines: he that can 'captivate his understanding 'to the obedience of Christ;' which is, to believe humbly

* Vincent. Lirin. 1. cont. heres. c. 3. † Aug. Epist. cont. Manichæ. c. 4. and 1. de vera. relig. c. 7. ‡ Hieron. Dial. cont. Luciferian. § Cyprian epist. 55. ad Cornel.

such things as Christ by his Church proposes unto him, though his reason or sense should not comprehend the same ; and finally, he that can be content *at Christ's command, 'to hear the Church' in all things, without doubt or exception, and obey the Governors thereof, though they should be scribes and pharisees,* and consequently, can say truly and sincerely, with the whole† college of Christ's Apostles, *Credo sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam*, I do believe the holy Catholic and universal Church, and whatsoever that Church does set forth, teach, hold or believe, that man, no doubt, is in a most sure way for matters of his faith, and cannot possibly walk awry therein ; but may think himself a good Christian for this first point, which is, as to matters of belief.

SECT. II.—*Concerning good Works.*

THERE follows the second part of Christian profession, concerning life and manners ; which is a matter of so much more difficulty, than the former, by how many more ways a man may be deceived and led from a virtuous life, than from sincere faith. Wherein there can be no comparison at all ; seeing the path of our belief is so manifest, as has been showed, that no man can err therein, but out of inexcusable wilfulness. Which wilfulness *Two causes of heresies.* in error, the holy‡ fathers of Christ's primitive Church, did always refer to two principal and original causes ; that is, to pride, or overweening in our own conceits ; and to malice against our superiors, for not giving us content in things that we desire. From the first, do proceed the devising of new opinions, new glossing, expounding, and applying of scriptures ; the calling of holy writ itself in question ; the contempt of ancient customs and traditions ; the preferring our judgment before all others, either present or past ; the debasing of holy fathers, priests, prelates, councils, ordinances, constitutions, and all other things and proofs whatsoever, that stand not with our own liking and approbation. From the second fountain are de-

*Gal. 5. Phil. 1. Titus 3. Rom. 13. Ephes. 4. Heb. 13. 2 Cor. 10. Matt. 18. Matt. 23. † Ambros. ep. 7. ad Syricium. Hieron. ad Pamach. ep. 6. in fine Aug. serm. 181. de temp. ‡ See S. Aug. lib. de util. cred. c. 1 and tract. 1. in ep. Joan. Cyp. ep. 61.

rived other qualities conformable to that humour ; as are, the denying of jurisdiction and authority in our superiors : the contempt of prelates ; the exaggeration of the faults and defects of our governors ; the impugning of all episcopal dignity, or ecclesiastical eminency, and especially of the See apostolic, whereunto appertains the correction of

such like offenders. For the satisfying this devilish and most pernicious vein of malice, those wicked reprobates do incite and arm the people against their spiritual pastors ; they kindle fac-

*The do-
ings of
heretics.*

tions against God's anointed substitutes : they devise a new Church, a new form of government, a new kingdom and ecclesiastial hierarchy upon earth ; whereby to bring men in doubt and staggering, what or whom to believe ; or whereunto to have recourse in such difficulties as do arise.

These two maladies, I say, of pride and malice, have been two causes of obstinate error in all heretics from the beginning as well noted that holy and ancient bishop and martyr St. Cyprian,*

*The ob-
servation
of St. Cy-
prian.*

when he said so long ago ; “ These are the beginnings and original causes of heretics, and wicked schismatics, first to please and esteem themselves ; and they being puffed up with the swelling of pride, to condemn their governors and superiors. Thus do they abandon and forsake the Church ; thus do they erect a profane altar out of the Church, against the Church ; thus do they break the peace and unity of Christ, and rebel against God's holy ordination.”

Now then as these are the causes, either only, or principally of erring in our belief, most facile and easy, as we see, to be discerned ; so there are many more occasions, causes, offsprings, and fountains to be found, of going astray in life and manners. That is to say, as many in number, as we have evil passions, inordinate appetites, wicked desires, or unlawful inclinations within our minds ; every one whereof is the cause oftentimes of a disorderly life, and breach of God's commandments. For which respect, there is much more set down in scripture, for exhortation to a good life ; than for direction of faith : for that the defect herein is more ordi-

*Many
causes of
evil life.*

*Cyp. ep. 65. ad Rogatian.

nary and easy, and more provoked by our own frailty ; as also by the multitude of infinite temptations. Wherefore we read that our Saviour Jesus in the very beginning of his preaching, straight after he was baptized, and had chosen unto him St. Peter, and St. Andrew, James and John, and some other few Disciples, went up to the mountain and there made his first most excellent sermon, recited by St. Matthew in three whole chapters, *Matt. v. vi. vii.* wherein he talks of nothing else, but of virtuous life, poverty, meekness, justice, purity, sorrow for sin, patience in suffering, contempt of riches, forgiving of injuries, fasting, prayer, penance, entering by the strait gate ; and finally of perfection, holiness, and integrity of conversation, and of the exact fulfilling of God's law and commandments.

The effect of Christ's first sermon. He assured his Disciples with great asseveration, *Matt. v.* that he came not to break the law, but to fulfill the same ; and consequently, that whosoever should break the least of his commandments, and should so teach men to do ; that is, should persevere therein, without repentance, and so by his example draw other men to do the like, should have no place in the kingdom of heaven. Again, he exhorted them most earnestly to be lights and to shine by good works to all the world ; and that except their justice did exceed the justice of scribes and pharisees, which was but ordinary, and external, they could not be saved. He told them plainly, they could not serve two masters in this life ; but either must forsake God, or abandon Mammon. He cried unto them, *Matt. vi. Attendite*, 'stand attentive,' and consider well your state and condition : and then again, *Matt. vii.* 'Seek to enter by the narrow gate.' And lastly he concludes: the only trial of a good tree, is the good fruit, which it yields ; without which fruit, let the tree be never so fair or pleasant to the eye, yet it is to be cut down and burned ; and that not every one who shall say or cry unto him, Lord, Lord, at the last day, should be saved, or enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but only such as did execute the will and commandments of his Father in this life. For want whereof, he assures them, that many at that day, who had not only believed, but also wrought miracles in his name, should be denied, rejected, and abandoned by him.

*Faith is
not suffi-
cient with-
out works.*

*A simi-
litude
touching
faith and
works.*

Which long lesson of virtuous life, being the first that ever our Saviour gave in public to his Disciples, then newly gathered together, as St. Matthew notes (having treated very little of points of faith before ; but only in general, having showed himself to be the true Messias, by some miracles and preaching) does sufficiently teach us, that it is not enough to believe in Jesus, and make profession of his name and doctrine, except we conform our lives and actions to the prescript of the commandments. For although in Christian religion, faith is the first and principal foundation whereupon all the rest is to be grounded ; yet, as in other material buildings, after the foundation is laid, there remains the greatest labour, time, cost, art, and diligence, to be bestowed upon the framing and furnishing of other parts that must ensue: even so in this celestial edifice or building of our soul, having laid once the foundation and ground of true belief ; the rest of all our lifetime, labour, and studies are to be employed in the perfection of our life and actions ; and as it were, in raising up the walls and other parts of our spiritual building, by the exercise of all virtues, and diligent observance of God's commandments. Without which, our faith is to no more purpose nor profit, than is a foundation without a building upon it ; or a stock or tree, that bears no fruit. Which thing St. James expresses most excellently in this fit similitude : ' For as the body without the spirit ' is dead : so also faith without works is dead.'

Concerning which necessary point of a virtuous life, and observing God's commandments, St. Augustine and other ancient fathers were of opinion, that not only the last words of St. James, and the whole discourse which he makes of this matter in that chapter ; but also both his, and all other apostles' writings, set forth and published after St. Paul's Epistles, were principally to repress the most absurd and pernicious error of some carnal and sensual Christians, in the primitive church, who whilst the apostles themselves were yet alive, to indulge more freely their own appetites, pretended upon some obscure and hard places in St. Paul, that faith alone was sufficient to save them. For proof whereof, I will alledge only these words of St. Augustine, written in a book for this purpose, entitled : Of

Faith and good Works : Thus then he begins.*

*St. Aus-
tin's dis-
course.*

‘ For that this wicked opinion of faith alone
‘ being sufficient for salvation, was sprung up in
‘ the apostles time by ill understanding of St.
‘ Paul ; all the other apostolical Epistles which
‘ ensue, of St. Peter, St. John, St. James, and St. Jude,
‘ were directed principally to this end, to prove with all
‘ vehemency ; That faith without good works is nothing
‘ worth. And indeed St. Paul himself did not define every
‘ manner of faith, whereby we believe in God, to be a sav-
‘ ing faith ; but only means that profitable and evangelical
‘ faith, *Gal. v.* which has works annexed, proceeding from
‘ charity. And as for that faith which is without works,
‘ and yet seems to these men to be sufficient for their sal-
‘ vation ; he protests, that it is so unprofitable, that he
‘ doubts not to say of himself ; *1 Cor. xiii.* if I should have
‘ all faith, in such sort, as I were able to move mountains,
‘ and yet had no charity ; I were nothing. By which
‘ charity, no doubt, good life is meant, for in another place
‘ it is said, *Rom. xiii.* Charity is the fulfilling of the law.
‘ Wherefore St. Peter most evidently in his second Epis-
‘ tle ; haaving exhorted men to holiness of life and manners ;
‘ shows that certain wicked persons took occasion by some
‘ obscure sentences of St. Paul, to promise themselves
‘ security of salvation by faith alone. Which hard sen-
‘ tences, St. Peter affirms, *2 Pet. iii.* that these miserable
‘ men perverted to their own destruction as they did also
‘ other holy Scriptures ; seeing that St. Paul was of the
‘ very same opinion, as the other apostles were, concern-
‘ ing life everlasting to be obtained by none, but such
‘ only, as joined virtuous life with their belief. But St.
‘ James of all others, is most vehement against such, as
‘ think, faith can suffice to salvation without good works ,
‘ insomuch, that he compares them to the devils themselves,
‘ saying : *James ii.* Thou dost believe that there is one
‘ God ; thou dost well: the devils also do believe the same,
‘ and tremble. What could be spoken more truly, briefly,
‘ and vehemently than this, seeing in the Gospel we
‘ read,† that the devils made the same confession of Christ’s
‘ Deity, as did St. Peter ; and yet Christ commended the

* Aug. lib. de fide and oper. c. 14. † Mark i. Matt. xvi, and xvii.

‘ one, and reprehended the other, &c. Wherefore, let not
‘ simple minds be deceived, and think they know God, if
‘ they confess him with dead faith; that is, with a faith
‘ void of good works, as the devils do, for that they read,
‘ perhaps in scripture these words of Christ; *John xv.*
‘ This is life everlasting, that men know thee the true God;
‘ and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Let them not, I
‘ say, be deceived with this; but let them remember how
‘ Christ’s apostles expounds that saying, when he writes:
‘ *John ii.* In this we know, that we have known him, if
‘ we observe his commandments; he that saith, that he
‘ knoweth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a
‘ liar, and the truth is not in him.’

Thus far I have thought good to alledge St. Augustine’s words and discourse, furnished as you see, with great variety of Scriptures, out of his most excellent book *De Fide and Operibus*, of which book he writes thus in another place of his works: ‘ I have writ a book of this question, whose title is Of Faith and Works, in which, according to the holy Scriptures, as much as by God’s help I could, I have demonstrated that men must be saved by that faith, which is joined with good works: which St. Paul did evidently enough declare, when he said; *Gal. v.* For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth ought, nor prepuce: but Faith, that worketh by charity. But if this faith do work evil and not well, then, without all doubt, it is a dead faith in itself, according to the apostle St. James, who adds yet further: *James ii.* If a man say he hath faith, but hath not works, can his faith be able to save him?” moreover, if a wicked man for his only faith may be saved, as some erroneously have believed; by help of that purging fire, whereof St. Paul speaks to the Corinthians, *1 Cor. iii.* then would it follow that faith without works may save a man; and then what St. James coequal apostle with St. Paul, has left written would be false, that faith without works cannot save us. Nay, it must be false also what St. Paul himself affirmed to the Corinthians, saying, *1 Cor. vi.* Be not deceived, for neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor drunkards, &c. shall possess the kingdom of God; which would not be true, if Christians persevering in these sins should be saved notwithstanding for only believing the faith of Christ. For if they be saved, how

' shall they not be in the kingdom of God ?' thus far St. Augustine.

The proof used by St. Gregory. St. Gregory the Great makes out of holy writ the very same discourse upon this point. For, having considered those most comfortable words of Christ to Saint Thomas: *Joan* xx. 'Blessed

' are they who have not seen, and yet have believed;' he speaks as follows.* 'Perhaps, here, every Christian will say within himself, I do believe, and therefore I am blessed and shall be saved. Wherein he says truth, if his life be answerable to this belief. For true faith does not contradict in manners, what it professes in words. For which cause, it was said of certain false Christians by St. Paul: *Tit.* i. 'They confess God in words: but deny him in deeds: and by St. John: *Joan* ii. Whosoever says he knows God, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar.' Which being so; we must examine the truth of our faith, by consideration of our life: 'for then, and not otherwise, are we true Christians, if we 'fulfil in works, what we have promised in words: that is; in the day of our baptism, we

What we promised in Baptism.

' promised to renounce the pomp of this world, together with all the works of iniquity: which promise, if we perform now after baptism; then are we true Christians, and may be joyful And in another place, the same holy father adds this.† 'For as divers men are Christians in profession and faith only, and not in life: hence it is said, by the voice of truth itself; *Matt.* vii. Not every one that shall say to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,' and again: 'Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not perform the things that I tell you?' Hence it is, that God complained of his people the Jews, saying; *Isa.* xxix. 13. 'This people honoureth me with their lips; but their hearts is far from me.' And the prophet David of the same people; *Psalms* lxxvii. They loved him with their mouth; and with their tongues they lied unto him, &c. Wherefore, let no man trust, that his faith may save him without good deeds; seeing that we know it is written expressly; Faith without works is dead, and consequently cannot be profitable, or save us from damnation' Hitherto St. Gregory.

* Greg. hom. 29. in Evan. † Lib. 33. moral. c. 7.

Which very conclusion, St. Chrysostom makes with very great vehemency, upon consideration of that woful chance and heavy judgment, that happened unto him, who in the gospel was admitted to the feast of Christian faith and knowledge; but for want of the ornament or garment of good life, was contumeliously deprived of his expectation: of whom St. Chrysostom's words are these.* 'He was invited to the feast, and brought to the table, but because by his foul garment, he dishonoured our Lord, that had invited him; hear how miserable and lamentable a punishment he suffered: He was not only thrust from the table and banquet; but also bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, where there is eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth. Wherefore let us not, I beseech you, dear brother, let us not, I say, deceive ourselves and imagine, that our faith will save us without good works. For except we join pure life to our belief, and in this heavenly vocation of ours, do apparel ourselves with worthy garments of virtuous deeds whereby we may be admitted at the marriage-day in heaven; nothing will be able to deliver us from the damnation of this miserable man that wanted his wedding weed,' Which thing St. Paul well notes, when having said: 2 Cor. v. 'We have an everlasting house in heaven not made by hands;' he adds presently this exception, *Sitamen vistiti, and non nudi inveniamur*; that is, if we be found at that day apparelled, and not naked. Would to God every Christian, desirous of his salvation, would ponder well this discourse and exhortation of St. Chrysostom.

The testimony and exhortation of St. Chrysostom.

And so to conclude our speech in this chapter, without allegation of further authorities, which are infinite to this effect, it may appear by what has already been set down, wherein the true profession of a Christian, consists; and thereby each man that is not partial, or blinded in his own affection, as many are, may take a view of his state and condition, and frame unto himself a very probable conjecture, how he is like to speed at the last accounting day: that is, what profit or damage he may expect, by his knowledge and profession

The conclusion of this chapter.

* Chrys. hom. 9. in Joan.

of Christian religion. For, as to him that walks uprightly in that vocation, and performs effectually every way his professed duty, there remain both infinite and inestimable rewards prepared : so to him that strays aside, and swerves from the right path of life or faith prescribed unto him, there are no less pains and punishments reserved. For which cause every Christian, that is careful of his salvation, ought to fix his eyes very seriously upon them both : and as he shows himself constant, firm, humble, obedient, and in one word, *Catholic* in belief ; so he must show himself honest, just, pure, innocent and holy in conversation.

This second point concerning life and manners, being more difficult, as has been showed, than the other of belief (whereof notwithstanding we have also treated sufficiently in the former chapters) the rest of the whole work shall tend to the declaration of this latter part, I mean of good life ; thereby to stir up and awake (if so it may please the merciful goodness of our blessed Saviour) the slothful hearts of Christians, to the consideration of their own state, and make them more vigilant in this great affair, whereupon depends their endless wo, or welfare.

CHAPTER VI.

Two principal exercises, that appertain to a Christian life, which are, to resist all sin, and to exercise all kind of virtue and good works ; with the means how to perform them both.

SECT. 1. *The reason of this Chapter.*

SUPPOSING that in the parts of this book which ensue, we are to deal only with such, as are instructed, and settled in true Christian faith (whereunto we have proved before, that a virtuous life, and good deeds are necessarily to be joined) it seems convenient in this place, to treat of the points or principal parts belonging thereunto. Which parts are briefly prescribed by God himself, in the writings of David, Isaiah, and other prophets of the old Testament, to be two, to wit.* ‘To decline from vice ; and embrace virtue.’ But much more plainly are they set down and explained by

* Psalm 26. and Isaiah 1.

St. Peter, St. Paul, and other saints of the evangelical law : the former affirming that the fruit and effects of 'Christ's death and passion is ; 1 *Pet.* ii. 'That we being dead to sins, should live to justice : ' and the other joining, *Titus* ii. 'The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to ' all men, instructing us, that renouncing impiety—we live ' justly, and godly in this world, &c.'

By which testimonies of holy writ, and by many others, which to this purpose might be alleged, is made clear and evident, that the whole duty of a Christian's life in this world, is reduced to these two heads or principals, to wit, to the resistance of all evil, and to the exercise of all piety and virtue. In respect of the first, our life is called in holy scripture,* a warfare upon earth, and virtuous men are termed soldiers. For, as good soldiers, do lie in continual wait to resist their enemies, so vigilant Christians do carefully stand upon their watch, for resisting the suggestions and temptations of sin. In regard of the second point, we are named† labourers, husbandmen, sowers, merchants, bankers, stewards, farmers and the like ; and our whole life is termed a mart, traffic, or negociation. For, as these kind of people do attend with diligence to the gain and increase of their temporal riches in this life : so ought we to apply ourselves wholly, in the continual exercise of good works, to the honour and praise of God, whose people we are ; and to the augmentation of our merit and treasure in the world to come.

These then are the two parts of a good Christian's life ; the two principal points whereupon we should meditate ; the exercise wherein we should be occupied ; the two legs whereupon we should walk towards our country ; the two arms wherewith we should lay fast hold of God's eternal kingdom ; the two wings whereby we must fly and mount up to heaven. So, whosoever does want any one of these two parts, though he had the other ; yet can he never ascend to God's bliss : no more than a bird can fly, being maimed of one of her wings. My meaning is ; that neither integrity of life is sufficient without good works ; nor good works available, without a pure and undefiled life.

Two parts of a good life.

One of these parts not available without the other.

* Job. 7. and 2 Cor. 10. † Matt. 9. 10. 20. and 1 Tim. 5

The latter is made clear by God's own speeches to the people of Israel; whose sacrifices, oblations, prayers and other such works, that were commended, and commanded by himself, he oftentimes rejected, and accounted abominable, *Isa. i. Jer. vi. and Amos v.* for that the offerers and exhibitors thereof, were men of impious and sinful conversation. The former also is apparently showed by Christ's parable of the foolish virgins; *Matt. xxv.* who though they were virgins, and incontaminate from sin: yet because they had not the oil of good works, to give light in their lamps, they were excluded from the marriage banquet: as also that other most unfortunate fellow was, *Matt. xxii.* who wanted his wedding ornaments. Both these points then are necessary to a Christian's salvation; and and so necessary, that the one without the other is not available. And by this may appear the most excellent perfection of a Christian life, if it were performed as it should be, and many no doubt, do perform it; which is to admit no sin either in mind or work; and to omit no virtue, that may be exercised. O angelical! yea more than evangelical excellency, for that angels have neither temptations to resist; nor meritorious works to exercise themselves in: we will treat briefly of both parts.

SECT. II.—Resistance of Sin.

AND as for the first point, which is resisting of sin, we are commanded by God's holy word to do it manfully, vigilantly, constantly, and sincerely. St. Paul does add, that in this resistance we ought to strive even to death and to the shedding of our blood, if need require. *Heb. xii. Nondum usque ad sanguinem restitistis adversus peccatum*

We must resist sin even to death.

repugnantes, you have not resisted unto the effusion of your blood in fighting against sin; as though he had said, this must you do, and this is your duty, and obligation, and to this God will have you bound, when occasion does require.

And to the Ephesians he makes a long discourse upon this matter, exhorting them to arm themselves to this fight: *Ephes. vi.* 'Put you on (says he) the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the snares of the devil, &c. Take unto you the armour of God, that you may be

‘able to resist in the day of evil.’ And finally, to omit many other speeches of his to this purpose; he gives a general rule to his scholar Timothy: *2 Tim. ii.* ‘For he also that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned except he strive lawfully.’

According to which doctrine, St. James, *James iv.* St. Peter, *1 Peter v.* and St. John, *1 John ii.* do earnestly exhort us to resist strongly and vigilantly the devil, the flesh, and the world, as a point wherein principally consists the duty of a good Christian in this life. In conformity where-to, the holy and blessed man Job endued with God’s spirit, does, after a large discourse of the dreadful power and cruelty of our great enemy Leviathan or Satan, end with this watch word; *Job xl. Memento belli:* be not unmindful of the war which thou hast in hand, and shalt have during life, with this mortal enemy of thine. If you ask me why our merciful Saviour Jesus Christ having conquered this Leviathan, and all the force of sin in him; would notwithstanding have us fight after he had overcome, and pass through a battle in imitation of him; one reason is evident by what we have cited before out of St. Paul: *2 Tim. ii.* that he will have us crowned: and none can be crowned, but he that has lawfully fought. And therefore he repeats so often in the book of Revelations, that he will give the crown of heaven, only to such as have overcome, and conquered in this combat. *Apoc. ii. Vincenti,* says he, *dabo manna absconditum.* To him, that overcometh, will I give the hidden manna. And again, *Qui vicerit, sic vestietur:* he that shall overcome shall thus be apparelled by me with glory.

*Why
Christ
will have
us fight.*

And finally, to omit many other places, he concludes the third chapter of Revelations in these words: To him that ‘shall overcome, will I grant to sit with me in my throne: as I also have overcome, and have sat with my father in his throne.’

In which last words, if you mark, there is another cause discovered of this our war, which ought to touch our very hearts, to wit, the imitation of our captain, and our being crowned with him: that as he, by fighting, and overcoming was exalted to the throne of his father; so we may be exalted to his throne, for the like reason. Upon which cause, and most comfortable consideration, St. Paul grounds himself in his epistle to the Hebrews, when he exhorts

them so earnestly to the like fight, as follows : *Heb. xii.*
 ‘ Laying aside every weight, and the sin that surrounded
 ‘ us, by patience let us run to the fight proposed unto us ;
 ‘ Looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who
 ‘ having joy proposed unto him, underwent the cross, des-
 ‘ pising the shame, and sitteth on the right hand of the
 ‘ throne of God.’

Divers reasons of our fight This was the most excellent encouragement and exhortation of St. Paul, whereby we see two or three particular causes uttered, why

Christ our redeemer has ordained us to fight so earnestly against the temptations of sin in this world : one, that we may thereby follow him, and show ourselves dutiful children of such a father, and worthy soldiers of such a captain ; and the other, that we may declare also thereby the force of his heavenly grace, which was not only able to conquer the devil, in his own divine person : but in his poorest servants in like manner, who by him do overcome, and conquer daily, and thereby do get unto themselves infinite crowns of glory in heaven : which again, is the third cause of this holy and pious ordination to have us fight. And this do the ancient* fathers prove

Why the motion of concupiscence to sin remains in us after baptism. at large in their writings, when they declare unto us, why notwithstanding the guilt of original sin, and concupiscence thereon depending, is taken away by Christ’s passion, and by virtue thereof in the sacrament of baptism, yet the sting or temptation of the said concupiscence, or incentive of sin, called by divines, *formes peccati*, does still

remain : and this not to our hurt, but *ad agonem*, as the father’s words are ; that is to say, to minister unto us, fight and combat, and thereby matter of victory and conquest, and merit here : and in the life to come, a crown of glory. O most merciful ordination of our good God ! what father could ever be so careful of his children, as he is of us, to work every way our good, and our greatest good ?

Hence also it proceeds, that St. James considering the grounds and points before specified, does (to animate us the more to this fight) use the most comfortable exhortation, whereby he begins his epistle in these words ; *Jam. i.* ‘ My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into

* See St. Augus. 1. de peccat. mort. cap. ult. & lib. 2. c. 28. & lib. 1. cont. Jul. c. 3. & lib. 2 cont. Jul. c. 3 & lib. 1 de. civ. cap. 25.

‘divers temptations.’ And to strengthen this, St. Paul assures us, 1 *Cor.* x. ‘That God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able.’ And other holy fathers do add further, for confirmation hereof; that Christ our Saviour delights so much in this battle and combat of ours against sin, that he vouchsafes to be present; and standing by us, looks on, and abets us therein, subministering to us both force and grace, wherewith to gain the victory; and this not only in external combats, such as were of his martyrs, against their bloody persecutors; but in all inward conflicts also of the mind, against the temptations of the aforesaid concupiscence, and of the flesh, world, and devil; and so does St. Athanasius record,* that Christ was present with that great saint, St. Anthony. And the like does St. *Antonius*, *Raymundus*,† and others, record of St. Catherine of Sienna, and other saints in their horrible conflicts and temptations of the flesh, and other like suggestions of the enemy, and how after the combat ended, for their more complete comfort, their Saviour appeared unto them (when they feared lest he having abandoned them, they had lost all) and showed that he was much pleased with their fight, seeing they yielded no consent but manfully had stood out, and got the victory. And when they asked him, where he was in time of their so extreme affliction: he answered, that he was by them, and looked upon their combat, and took pleasure to see them fight so manfully by the force of his grace; being assured, that he would make them win and have the victory by the help that he gave them. And this it is to serve such a master, and such comfort may we take to enter into battle upon confidence of such a captain, under whom, no man loses or takes hurt; but he that either runs away, or refuses the battle, or confides over much in his own strength, and not in the strength of his said master.

Christ is present at our combats and looks on.

And thus much be spoken briefly of the pious causes that moved our Saviour to leave us this war; but now somewhat must be said also of the manner how we are to behave ourselves therein, that is to say, with what diligence, with what attention, with what vigour, constancy, sincerity,

How we must behave ourselves in battle.

* *Athana. in vita S. Ant.* † *B. Ramund. in vita S. Cathar. Sienn. & S. Ant. Episcopus Florent. P. 3. tit. 23. c. 24.*

and resolution. For though, this concupiscence, or *forme, peccati*, this sting of sensuality inclining us to sin, be left only *ad agonem*, that is, to strive withal, as before has been said : yet it is a fastidious and dangerous worm ; a most pestilent, and pestiferous snake lying within our bowels ; which if it be not diligently looked into, and resisted betimes, and with all watchfulness ; certain it is that it will overcome, conquer, and consume us, or utterly infect and poison us before we are aware. Hear the complaint of one well exercised in this point : *Rom. vii.* ‘ I see (says St. Paul) another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? the grace of God by Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The complaint of St. Paul against the stirring up concupiscence.

Here you see that St. Paul after his baptism, yea, and after his confirmation in grace also, as may appear out of this very epistle to the Romans, cries out that he felt this sting of concupiscence in his body, so strong and forcible against the law of his mind, as if it would violently compel him to commit sin indeed ; and that only the grace of God by Christ through the merits of his passion, was able to deliver him from the tyrant, and from these strong assaults. Unto which grace of our Saviour, this holy Apostle’s own diligence and co-operation was not wanting ; for so he both testifies of himself, and exhorts other men to the same, Of himself, he testifies every where of his fights and combats, and tells the manner thereof ; as for example to the Corinthians : *1 Cor. ix. Ego sic pugno, non quasi aerem verberans &c.* I do fight (in the combat of sin) not as one beating the air ; that is to say, not in vain, or idly, without purpose, making vain shows and flourishes only, as some do. But how then, holy apostle ? hearken I pray you what immediately follows in the same place.

‘ But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become repro- bate.’ O dreadful speech ! for those that either do fly wholly this combat, or are negligent, or over delicate in the fight, seeing that this chosen vessel of God, after his being taken up into the third heaven, and made partaker of God’s secrets, did think it so necessary for his

St. Paul’s fight against the flesh.

salvation to fight this battle, with such affliction and mortification of his body; that he brought it not only into obedience and subjection to his spirit, but into servitude also (for that is the word which the apostle uses)

Servitude of the body unto the spirit. signifying thereby a most perfect subjection of his flesh to his spirit, such as bond-men or slaves do use towards their lords, not daring

to look aside, nor to lift up so much as a finger against them, without certain assurance of severe punishment for the same; and so did St. Paul subdue his body unto his spirit.

He teaches others also the same manner of fight, when he says to the Colossians; *Col. iii.* ‘mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth,’ and then tells them wherein they must be mortified, to wit, in resisting the temptations ‘of fornication, uncleanness,

St. Paul’s direction for the manner of our fight ‘lust, evil concupiscence, covetousness, &c.’

‘And not only these, but their very roots and origins also: as, ‘anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech, lying, and ‘the like;’ which buds, and evil fruits of

concupiscence, in his epistle to the Romans, he calls *facta carnis*, works of the flesh; for that by instigation of the flesh they commonly are committed; and then he gives this general direction; *Rom. vii.* ‘If you live according to the flesh, you shall die (to wit eternally) but ‘if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you ‘shall live.’ This then is his meaning about the quality of this combat and fight, that it must be by chastising, and bringing our body into servitude, and by mortifying the members and carnal inclinations thereof, by the force and dominion of our spirit; and that he who follows this rule, is in the way of life, and contrary wise, he that is over indulgent to the ease and appetite of his own flesh, runs the certain path to perdition, according to the saying of our Saviour; *Matt. ii.* *Qui amat animam suam perdet eam*: he that loves his soul more than he should, and yields too much to sensual delights, shall lose her; and he that hates her, that is, hates excesses, and represses the same by mortification, shall gain and preserve her to eternal life.

Upon this ground then and doctrine, this fight against sin and the concupiscence thereof, has been always maintained with great care and carefulness, by the best sort of

Not only the work of sin, but consent also is to be resisted. Christians since Christ's time, and that, with such precise exactness, as not only they resisted all external acts of sin: as, for example, of adultery, theft, murder, deceit, rapine, injustice, and the like, but the very inward consent of heart also; for that Christ himself determined that point in the case of adultery, *Matt. v.* that when there is consent of inward will, the sin is committed before God though it never came to external act.

Moreover, the holy apostle St. James, notes, *James iv.* three steps or degrees concerning the completement of sin by the consent of heart; to wit, suggestions, delectation, and consent: whereof, as the first is from the enemy, the second, from our sensuality, the third from our reason and free-will: so may the first be without our fault, the second includes, for the most part some negligence of ours, the third convinces us always of iniquity; or to use St. Gregory's own words*: 'In suggestion is the seed of sin; in delectation, the nourishment: in consent, the perfection.' And therefore he that will avoid this consent, whereupon depends all (for the external act of sin, is no sin, if there be no internal consent of mind†) a good Christian is bound to be vigilant in all these three degrees; and first, to avoid suggestions, as much as he may, by flying occasions either of company or others. Secondly, if suggestions come: to fly and resist delectation, by cutting off the temptation at the beginning, and crushing the serpent's head, as soon as it is discerned whether it tends. But if we should be negligent in this: or could not avoid, or repress some sensual delectation: then at least to stand resolutely or manfully in defence of our last bulwark, wherein lies our life or death, which is the consent of heart.

Now, for performance of our duty, in these three things, especially the two latter, wherein there is more danger, two diligences are necessary: the one to be very watchful over our own actions, thoughts, and words, according to that saying of holy Job; *Job ix.* 'I did fear all my works.' And the

* Greg. ad. interrog. 11. Aug. Cant. † See of this St. Aug. 1. 1. de ser. Do. c. 12. 1. 12. de Trin. c. 12.

prophet David more exactly ; *Psalm lxxvi.* ‘ And I meditated in the night with my own heart, and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit : behold an exact examination of his thoughts and deeds. And this exercise of examining passed down to the saints of the New Testament with no less rigour, but rather more, than it was used by these saints of the old law ; as it is evident by St. Paul, *1 Cor. iv.* who so exactly had examined his own soul on this behalf, that he durst affirm, that to his knowledge, he was guilty of no fault or offence at all towards God ; though yet in this he would not pronounce himself justified. And hence proceeded the custom of other holy men, retained until this day in God’s Church, by such as are careful in this battle ; which is to examine exactly, and often their own conscience, both for thoughts, words, and deeds. And this is the first diligence.

The second is to attend to mortification of our passions, evil affections, and sinister inclinations, proceeding ordinarily from the aforesaid infection of our sensual concupiscence ; for by this means we come to weaken the forces of our enemy, and to cut off, as it were, his chief battery against us. And as nothing is more effectual to this end, than to chastise and keep our bodies low by corporal affliction ; it is wonderful how all the ancient saints, even from the apostles themselves, did frequent this wholesome remedy. For of the apostles in general, there is left written by one of them, *2 Cor. xi.* and *2 Cor. v.* They passed their lives in much fasting, much watching, hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness, whereof the first two at least, must needs be presumed to have been voluntary.

The same apostle St. Paul, writing in like manner to his scholar Timothy, and persuading him not to drink altogether water ; but to use some little wine, at least for his stomach and frequent infirmities, does well show thereby as St. Chrysostom also notes,* and the matter is clear, that St. Timothy did wholly abstain from wine ; and that as may be believed, by St. Paul’s own example,† who by his fact

The second diligence is mortification.

St. Timothy and St. Paul abstained from wine

* Chrys. in 1. ep. ad. Tim. c. 5. and hom. 2. ad Pop. Antioche. num

† Acts. 18. and 21. Numb. 6.

of going into the temple,*purified as a Nazarine, and with them, upon one day's warning only (whereas the Nazarines were bound to abstain thirty days from wine, before they entered*) is inferred to have been utterly abstemious, that is to say did drink no wine at all; and so lived always a Nazarine's life; wherein it is likely his scholar Timothy would imitate him, as also in the rest of his bodily chastisements, and mortifications of his flesh.

The like is recounted of other apostolical men that lived in those days: as for example, of St. James the apostle, surnamed the just, of whom is recorded by Egesippus, and related by Eusebius;† that besides other austerities of life concerning his apparel, diet, and continual mortification; his exercise of praying on his knees was such (a thing that delicate Christians of our days much fly) that the skin of his knees was made as hard, as the brawn of a camels knee. And yet if we consider, what necessity a man, that was so holy and just, and had lived so long with Christ himself, might have of so much prayer, in respect of us now; the difference will quickly appear. The like, or rather greater

The austerity of St. Mark and his first Christians in Alexandria.

severity of life does that learned Jew and Philosopher Philo‡ recount of his countrymen, the first Christians in Alexandria under St. Mark the Evangelist, sent thither from Rome by St. Peter, to begin that church, which he did with such exact piety, sanctity, simplicity, abstinence, and mortification; as moved their adversaries in religion (whereof Philo was one, who lived at that time, and saw their lives) to extreme admiration. And this direction, no doubt, St. Mark§ carried from St. Peter, that sent him thither; as St. James, and other apostles, and St. Mary Magdalen (that perhaps exceeded them all in this kind) took the same from Christ himself, and such as followed them in this exercise of austerity of life, had their warrant both from these men's example, and from the spirit of God instructing them; whereof you may read infinite examples in the foregoing Egesippus, and Eusebius, and others, that wrote the lives of saints in those first ages;

*Joseph. 1. 2. de bello c. 15. † Egesip. apud Euseb. lib. 2. hist. cap. 22. ‡ Philo. 1. 4. de vita Contemplat. § Euseb. in Chron. An. Christi 46

as also in St. Athanasius, in the life of St. Anthony the monk, and in St. Hierom, who registered the acts of St. Paul the hermit, and of St. Hilarion. The like you may see in Joannes Cassianus, Paladius, Joannes Climacus, and others that have recorded things of admiration in this behalf, which we now are almost afraid to read; and much more to imitate. All which rigour of exact life and mortification in these ancient Christians, tended notwithstanding to this end; to mortify their bodies, subdue their flesh and sensuality, repress the motions of their concupiscence, that thereby they might stand the more secure in this battle of resisting sin; wherefore St. Augustine used those effectual words.* *Moriar ne moriar.* I will die to the end I may not die; that is to say, I will mortify my flesh lest I be slain in this battle.

*St. Augustine's
worthy
saying.*

This was the beginning of the austerities of life in those first fathers, and founders of our religion. This was the cause of first leaving the world, and flying to the desert. This was the origin of all monasteries, cloisters, hermitages, cells, and solitary habitations: and finally, this was the reason of all breach and separation from flesh and blood, and from all worldly conversation; thereby to avoid all occasions of external temptations; and by that means to gather the more force and strength to resist the internal. In which internal conflict notwithstanding, the combat oftentimes was so sharp and vehement; that it is most wonderful to consider what is recorded by the aforesaid writers, touching assaults endured by those ancient saints that had left the world; and what extreme pains and afflictions they sustained willingly, to continue their resistance against their spiritual adversary. Which things were set down, no doubt, and left written to us by God's holy providence, for our confusion that now live, who are so careless and negligent in resisting the assaults and temptations of sin, that we make no account thereof at all.

St. Hierom, in a certain epistle, bears witness of himself, that, having abandoned the world, and retired himself into a wild desert of Syria, he was most terribly tempted, not unlike to St. Paul, 2 Cor. xii. with suggestions of the flesh. But what

*A marvelous
example of St.
Hierom.*

did he to resist this temptation? and what success had he therein? you shall hear his own declaration.* ‘How
 ‘ oftensays he, being in the wilderness and vast desert,
 ‘ burnt up and scorched by the extreme heat of the sun,
 ‘ (wherein the monks of my time had their ugly habita-
 ‘ tions) was I tempted with thoughts of Roman delights,
 ‘ &c. I sat alone, for I was replenished with sorrow and
 ‘ bitterness. The parts of my body were now become de-
 ‘ formed and ugly, with continual wearing of my sack;
 ‘ and my skin was as black as the skin of an Æthiopian.
 ‘ I wept daily, and passed my time continually in groaning:
 ‘ and when at length, sleep came upon me against my will,
 ‘ I lay down and did beat my bare bones, scarce hanging
 ‘ together, against the ground Of my meat and

*The au-
 serity of
 old monks.*

‘ drink I will say nothing; whereas in this place
 ‘ we that are monks, do use only cold water,
 ‘ even when we are sick; and do think it a great
 ‘ delicacy, to taste any one thing, that savours of the fire.

‘ I therefore being in this case, and having shut myself
 ‘ up in this prison, for fear of hell fire, and for avoiding of
 ‘ sin; being not only companion to scorpions and wild
 ‘ beasts, but wholly worn out with continual fasting; yet
 ‘ I could not avoid the temptations of the flesh, &c. Where-
 ‘ fore I did cast myself down at the feet of Je-
 ‘ sus: I did bathe the ground about me with tears;
 ‘ and dried the same up again with my own hair.
 ‘ I did repress my rebellious flesh, with continual
 ‘ abstinence of whole weeks together. I am not
 ‘ ashamed to confess this misery of my wretched
 ‘ state: I remember that I cried unto Jesus, whole

*St. Hie-
 rom’s
 combat
 with
 tempta-
 tions of
 the flesh.*

‘ days and nights together; and ceased not to beat and
 ‘ knock my breast; until he arose and rebuked my enemy;
 ‘ and thereby restored to me my former tranquillity. I
 ‘ persevered in prayer, in that forlorn and savage desert,
 ‘ being angry and rigorous against myself) and I hampered
 ‘ with imprisonment my miserable flesh, as our Lord is my
 ‘ witness; until at length, after infinite tears shed, and my
 ‘ very sight dazzled with long looking up, and
 ‘ beholding the heavens, I seemed again to be
 ‘ restored to the company and fellowship of an-
 ‘ gels: Wherewith being made exceeding joyful;

*The con-
 clusion of
 striving in
 the end.*

* Hierom. ep. 22. ad Eust. Paulo post initium.

‘ and replenished as it were with all kind of divine and
 ‘ celestial solace; I began to sing again within myself
 ‘ that most pleasing song: *Cant.* 1 We will run after thee
 ‘ to the odour of thy ointments.’

Thus did these blessed fathers and saints of *The mis-*
 God behave themselves: and thus did they esteem *erable*
 themselves bound to do, to resist sin, and to main- *state of*
 tain their integrity, against the wicked assaults of *most*
 their ghostly enemy; remembering how it is writ- *Christians*
 ten* ‘ strive for justice for thy soul: and even unto death *at this day.*
 fight for justice.’ But alas, dear brother, how do we be-
 have ourselves in this important business? what do we?
 what pains take we? what attention, what vigilance do we
 hold upon our thoughts, words and actions? what caution
 do we use? what resistance do we make? is there any
 man that flies the occasions of sin; or rather provokes not
 the same? is there any now a days that mortifies his flesh;
 or rather does not cherish and pamper it to wickedness? is
 there any man that represses his own appetites? that stands
 in fight against sensual suggestions? nay rather, do not all
 the world run after their own concupiscence? do they not
 yield themselves as slaves to every temptation that does
 arise? to every assault that the enemy makes? do they
 not devour every hook which the devil lays to entrap them,
 and swallow down every poisoned bait that is cast for their
 destruction? O merciful Lord! what a pitiful state of the
 world is this? Harken good Christians, how
 this case of a careless sensual man is described, *A description*
 even by the very finger of God himself; *Prov.* *of a*
 vii. ‘ I looked out of the window of my house *man that*
 ‘ through the lattice; (says the divine wisdom of *follows his*
 (God) I behold a foolish young man, who passeth *own con-*
 ‘ through the street by the corner in the darkness, and be- *cupiscence.*
 ‘ hold a woman meeteth him in harlot’s attire, prepared to
 ‘ deceive souls, &c. She intangled him with many words,
 ‘ and drew him away with the flattery of her lips. Im-
 ‘ mediately he followeth her as an ox led to be a victim,
 ‘ and as a lamb playing the wanton, not knowing (silly sot)
 ‘ that he is drawn like a fool to bonds till the arrow pierce

*Ecclesiasticus iv.

‘ his liver : as If a bird should make haste to the snare,
 ‘ and knoweth not that its life is in danger.’

This is the description which the Holy Ghost uses to set out unto us, the miserable condition of a desolate and wretched Christian, who has no care of resisting temptations, but follows every suggestion of his own sensual appetite ; and only wounds to death his own heart and soul, thereby not only wounds to death his own heart and soul, by every temptation he yields unto ; but also as the scripture here notes, enthrals himself in such miserable bondage and captivity, and casts himself into such strong bands and inextricable fetters of his enemy ; that he cannot possibly afterwards deliver himself but by some wonderful and extraordinary miracle wrought by God. For as Christ’s apostles writes : *Joan* vii. ‘ that whosoever committeth sin, ‘ is the servant of sin.’ And the Holy Spirit of God in another place say : *Prov.* v. ‘ His own iniquities catch the ‘ wicked, and he is fast bound with the ropes of his own sins.’ Which hands and chains are so knit, and

The chains of sin. strongly linked together in a sensual man ; that being once entangled, he is drawn, from link to link, and encompassed about with so many folds, that he seldom can escape, until he come to the end thereof, which is fastened even in hell itself. This thing do these holy* fathers of God’s church express by this deduction : in careless and negligent Christians, suggestions (which is the beginning of this dangerous and infernal chain) draws after it thought ; cogitation draws affection ; affection, delectation ; delectation, consent ; consent, operation ; operation, custom ; custom, despair of God’s mercy ; despair brings in the defending of sins committed ; after which follows immediately, both vaunting, boasting, and glorying in wickedness, which is the next inseparable link to damnation itself.

The miseries of them that resist not sin. To these miseries, and inexpressible calamities is the world brought, by not resisting the temptations of sin ; but yielding to every unlawful motion of our sensual appetite. According as it was foretold long ago : *Eccl.* xviii. ‘ If thou

* See St. Greg. 1. 4. Moral, c. 23. Isid. 1. do tum. bono. c. 23.

‘ give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to the enemies.’ O ye children of Adam! why consider you not this thing? O worldlings! O careless Christians! why forget you this point, so necessary to be pondered? Is it possible that men should be so negligent in their own apparent, and irremediable dangers? the world is now come to that desperate condition, described by Job, *Job* xv. wherein men drinketh iniquity like water: that is, without difficulty, scruple, remorse of conscience, fear of hell, care, doubt, examination, or thought. We are now come to that obstinate contempt prophesied by Daniel: *Dan.* xii. ‘ The wicked shall deal wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand.’ Nay, the most part of men are entered into that dreadful, and most horrible plight, whereof the wise man said: *Prov.* xviii. ‘ The wicked man when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth.’ But what are the words immediately ensuing? ‘ But ignominy and reproach follow him.’ Which St. Paul expounds more plainly in this manner: *Phil.* iii. ‘ Whose end is destruction.’

Wherefore, he that is a good Christian indeed, *The conclusion of this part.* and desires to enjoy the fruit of that vocation, let him beware of this perilous labyrinth: and learn to resist his carnal appetites betime. Let him crush the head of the serpent at the first entrance of unlawful suggestions; as in the second part of this Directory he shall more particularly be instructed to do. In the mean time, this already spoken shall be sufficient, to declare the great importance, weight and necessity of this affair, and the manifold mischiefs, which ensue unto the world, for want of watchfulness and diligence in this war.

SECT. III.—*Christian duty for abounding in good works.*

AND thus having showed what bad soldiers we are in fighting and resisting our enemy; it remains to consider, what prudent stewards and labourers we are, for increase of our gain and spiritual riches, by the exercise, negotiation, and traffic of good works. About which point is to be observed, that man, from his first fall in paradise, was assigned to travail and take pains in this kind of exercise; and in no sort to be idle. For so it is plainly set down in the book of Genesis: *Gen.* ii. ‘ Man was placed in paradise to dress it.’ And after that in divers places in the

old Testament, the spirit of God exhorts men to be industrious and diligent: *Prov. xii.* To till such land, as God had lent them for their gain, *Eccles. xx.* which the prophet Hosea interprets thus: *Hosea x. Seminate vobis Justitiam:* Sow for yourselves in justice. And the wise man more plainly: *Eccles. ix.* ‘Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, ‘do it earnestly.’ The reason of which exhortation is set down in another place: *Anima operantium impinguabitur.* The soul of such as labour, and take pains shall be fattened; and again, *Seminanti justitiam, merces fidelis.* To him that sows justice or good deeds, there remains a faithful and just reward. In respect whereof in the description of a blessed and fortunate man, it was put for one principal quality by the prophet; *Psalms xxiii.* ‘Who hath not taken ‘(or received) his soul in vain;’ but laboured and employed the same to his greatest benefit. And this in the old Testament. But in the new, wherein the most excellent

*Of labour-
ing in the
New Tes-
tament.*

merits of Christ do yield inestimable dignity to all good works, that are done in his name, this precept of labouring has more place, and is more seriously recommended; for by Christ’s spirit and abundance of grace, we are more enabled to perform the same, as may appear by the words of God himself in Ezekiel: were foretelling the times of the Messias to come, he says, *Ezek. xxxvi.* ‘And I will put my spirit in ‘the midst of you: and I will cause you to walk in my commandments, and to keep my judgments, and do them.’ Which is to be understood of the performance of good works, according as St. Paul describes the condition of Christian people, when, he calls them, *Titus ii.* ‘A people ‘acceptable, cleansed by Christ’s blood, pursuing of good ‘works.’ And in another place he defines a good Christian

*The defini-
tion of
a good
Christian*

to be, *Ephes. ii.* ‘The workmanship of God, ‘created in Christ Jesus in good works.’ And yet further, Christ himself in the gospel, declares plainly what the state and condition of Christians are in this life, by the parable wherein he likens himself to the noblemen who committed divers sums of money to his servants, with this charge; *Luke xix. Negotiamini dum venio:* ‘Tradetill I come,’ and call for an account.

*The voca-
tion of a
Christian*

By all which it is most manifest, that the life and vacation of a Christian in this world, is to labour and make his gain, by the talents that God

has lent him; and to *fructify in all good works*, 2 Col. ii. as St. Paul exhorts us. Hereby also does appear that the time of this our life is nothing else, but a certain season allotted, wherein to sow and plant; nothing else, but a fair or market wherein to traffic, negotiate, and make our exchange for the kingdom of heaven. In which affair and negotiation, he that is diligent, laborious, and industrious; is accounted *Prov. x.* a 'wise man,' even by God's own mouth: as on the contrary; the careless, slothful and negligent man is called, *Prov. x.* 'the son of confusion,' void of wit, and subject to all misery, contempt, and beggary. Hence are those speeches of holy scripture, *Prov. xii. 2.* *Manus fortium dominabitur*: The hand of the valiant shall bear rule. And again: *Prov. xi. 16.* *Robusti habebunt divitias*. The strong shall have riches. And yet further: *Eccl. xx.* 'He that tilleth his land, shall make a 'high heap of corn.' And to the negligent it is said, on the other side: *Prov. x.* *Egestatem operata est manus remissa*: 'The slothful hand hath wrought poverty.' And finally, the more to confound our folly and laziness in this point, and to make deeper impressions thereof in our hearts, we are by holy writ referred, even unto the school and instruction of unreasonable creatures. *Prov. vi.* 'Go to 'the Ant, or sluggard (says the wisdom of God) and consider her ways, and learn wisdom; which, although she 'hath no guide, nor master, nor captain, provideth her 'meat for herself in the summer, and gathereth her food 'in the harvest.' By which words we are admonished, not only what is our duty in this life, concerning labour in good works; but also, that the most excellent and supreme point of wisdom, which possibly can be imagined, is, to gather store in this time present, for the time to come; and to make our provision in this world, whereunto to live in the country, whereunto we take our journey.

This is that great and rare wisdom which is called in scripture, *Prov. ix.* 'The wisdom of 'Saints:' or rather, as St. Paul terms it: *Rom. xi.* the wisdom of God himself, not known to the world; that wisdom, which Isaiah calls, *Isaiah xxxiii. 6.* *divitias salutis*: the riches of salvation: That, whereof the wise man says, *Sap. vi. 6.* *Cogitare de illa, sensus est consummatus*, to think therefore upon her, is perfect understanding and prudent knowledge. Again: *Sap. vii. 28.* 'God loveth none, but him that dwelleth' (or remain-

Christian wisdom wherein it consists

eth) 'with wisdom.' And finally, to stir us up to this kind of wisdom he makes an example exhortation! with a declaration of the nature, dignity, and utility thereof, to this purpose: *Eccles* vi. 19. 'Come to her as one that plougheth, and soweth and wait for her good fruits. For in working about her thou shalt labour a little, and shall quickly eat of her fruits. How very unpleasant is wisdom to the unlearned, and the unwise will not continue with her. She is not manifest unto many, but with them to whom she is known, she continueth even to the sight of God, &c. Give ear, my son, and take wise counsel, and cast not away my advice, &c. For in the latter end thou shalt find rest in her, and she shall be turned to thy joy.

This was that blessed and wise man's counsel; and for fulfilling of this counsel, as also for obtaining the rest, joy, and final consolation here mentioned, St. Paul cries so vehemently unto us, *1 Cor.* xv. 14. exhorting us everywhere to do good works, and that abundantly, instantly, in all times, to all men, upon all occasions, and with immoveable constancy; assuring us, *Luke* xvi. that our labour herein shall not be lost, but that the time shall come when we shall reap the fruit thereof. To which purpose also appertains the parable of the prudent steward, propounded by our Saviour; with a very effectual exhortation in the end, that in this life we should purchase ourselves friends, by the use and distribution of our wicked mammon, who may afterwards make us a place in heaven. To this effect are directed all those admonitions of holy scripture. *Phil.* ii. 'Work your salvation.' Again, *1 Peter* i. 'Brethren, be ye careful to make your vocation and election sure, by good works.' And St. Paul adjoins another circumstance; thereby to move us the sooner, saying *Gal.* vi. 'While we have time let us do good works:' insinuating hereby, that this time present was allowed us, only for that purpose; and that this time being past, there would be no more place for such matters; according to that sage admonition of our Saviour himself: *Jo.* ix. 'The night cometh, when no man can work.'

The diligence of old Christians to work while they had time.

For preventing of which night, and to take time while it served, very strange it is to consider the pains, watchfulness, and diligence which ancient holy Christians in former ages did use; and the senseless forgetfulness wherein we pass our days now. They imitated the good husband-

man, who is careful to cast his seed into the ground, whilst fair weather lasts, and the diligent merchant who neglects not to lay out his money, while the good market endures. They knew, the time would not be long, which they had to work in; and therefore they bestirred themselves seriously whilst opportunity was present. Hence among other things proceeded all those goodly monuments of alms deeds, and charitable works yet extant in the world, as witness of their exercise in this kind of wisdom. So many commonwealths established; so many churches built, and endowed with abundant maintenance; so many bishoprics, deanries, archdeaconries, canonries, prebendaries, chantries, and benefices; so many hospitals, and houses of orphans, and fatherless infants; as also for the relief of other poor, impotent, and distressed people. So many seminaries, schools, halls, colleges, and universities for increase of learning; so many bridges, highways, causeways, town-houses, and other public conveniences: so many places of prayer and devotion; as monasteries, abbeys, priories, convents, nunneries, hermitages, cells, oratories, and other like, for repose of virtuous people that would leave the world and betake themselves only to the contemplation of heavenly things, and exercise of a more holy, and retired life.

All which charitable deeds, and many more that cannot be recounted, came out of the purses and coffers of godly Christians in ancient times: who very often, gave not only of their abundance and superfluities; but spared also from their own sustenance and necessary relief: as also took away and alienated many things from their own children and posterity, to employ them in these charitable uses, for the benefit of their souls. Whereas, on the contrary, we that now live in this miserable corrupt time, are so far from giving away our necessities, and plucking from our own bodies, towards these offices of charity; that we make no scruple at all, to spoil the poor and godly of these benefits and reliefs, which were left unto them by our fore-fathers. And as for our own superfluities, we seek commonly to employ them, rather on hawks and dogs, and brute beasts (as sometimes also upon much more vile uses) than in charitable deeds, to the relief of our poor brethren, and to the ease of our own souls, in the

The charitable deeds of our ancestors, and want thereof in us.

life to come. So utterly fails the whole world at this day, in performing this point of doing good deeds.

Wherefore to draw a conclusion of this whole chapter, it may appear, by what has hitherto been said : first, what a perfect and most excellent creature a good Christian is; whose life is nothing else but a continual warfare and resistance of all sin, in thought, word, and deed; and an incessant exercise of all piety and good works, which his hand, or heart, may possibly perform. Which kind of life if it were exactly fulfilled, in such sort as it was prescribed by Christ the author of our profession; most evident it is, that the common weal of Christianity would be a most heavenly, blessed, and angelical state upon earth, wherein no fraud, no deceit, no malice, no contention, no wickedness, injustice, or violence would reign; and consequently, either few, or no temporal laws would be necessary for punishment of the same. For, by the only law of religion and conscience, all would be simplicity, all purity, all truth and honesty, concord, love, and charity one towards the other; as we read, it fell out in the first days and ages of Christian religion, when this law of conscience, was yet observed. But now, as the world has abandoned, commonly in every place, these two principal parts of Christian duty, (I mean the resisting sin, and performing good works) a great part of Christians are become more sensual and dissolute in manners and life, than perhaps ever were the more civil part of Gentiles and infidels; which is a most intolerable dishonour to our Saviour who gave his life for reducing us to a better conversation. For which cause, in all reason, sight and equity, the punishment of such unworthy Christians, must needs be far greater, at the latter day, than of the very Pagans, who had not that light and assistance for their direction: according to that speech of Christ to certain ungrateful towns and places, wherein he had preached: *Luke x.* ‘Wo to thee, Chorozian: wo to thee, Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon, (which are heathen cities) had been wrought the mighty works, that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance, &c. And therefore I tell you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.’ Which point, would to God, men now a-days would attentively consider.

Secondly, it may appear by these and other things before set down, what a marvellous different life the good, and evil do pass in this world; and consequently, how different a lot they are to receive in the next, from him that rewards each man as St. Paul says *Rom. ii. 2. Tim. iv. and 2 Cor. v.* according to his actions, either good or evil. For first, the virtuous Christian does not only abstain from committing sin (especially that which divines call mortal, and whicheach man by God's assistance avoid), but also by continual resisting and fighting against the same he increases daily, and hourly his merit for the crown of heaven. But the careless man, by yielding consent of heart to every lewd concupiscence that offers itself, does not only not gain any merit at all: but heaps up sin upon sin without end, measure or number. Again, the careful man, besides avoiding sin, and the gain which he gathers by fighting in that combat, performs also infinite good works, at least in heart and desire, which is accepted by God for deeds, where further ability fail. But the loose Christian, neither in heart, or deed does any good at all; but, in place thereof, commits infinite evils. For, as the one employs his whole mind, heart, words, and hands, with all the forces, and other abilities, that God has given him, to the doing of good, and resisting of evil; so the other bends all his powers of body, mind, and fortune, to the service of vanities, the world, and his own flesh, and to the increase of the enemies of Christ's kingdom. And hereby, as the former increases hourly in merit before God, so the latter continually, by all his thoughts, words, deeds, and endeavours, does multiply his sins, whereunto by God's justice are due the torments of hell. And in this contrary course, they pass over their lives, for twenty, thirty, forty, more or fewer years, and so come to die, each man with his contrary account: which being such as I have said, can it be marvellous to any man living, if there be so great a diversity in their everlasting conditions in the world to come; seeing their dealings, and reckonings were so opposite and unequal in this present life.

The difference of the virtuous and wicked in this world and in the next.

A point of great consideration

Learn then, my dear brother, if thou be wise by these and the like considerations, to awaken thyself, whilst thou hast time. If thou find by examination of the two aforesaid parts of Chris-

The conclusion with an exhortation.

tian duty, that hitherto thou hast worked awry, and hast not performed the life required in that vocation; thank God for this so great a benefit, as is the revealing of thy danger, while yet there is time and place to make amends. Many, no doubt, are this day in torments, and will be everlastingly, who passed over their lives without ever thinking of these affairs: and if they had received so special favour, as thou dost now, in having these matters so particularly laid before thee, perhaps they had escaped those eternal calamities, wherein now they are fallen, without possibility of redress. Use then God's mercy to thy gain, dear Christian, and not to thy greater, and more intolerable damnation. Cast not away wilfully, that most precious jewel, thy soul, which Christ has bought so dearly, and which he desires so vehemently to save and enrich with grace and everlasting glory, if thou wouldst yield the same into his hands, and be content to direct thy life according to his most holy and sweet commandments. Remember, often, what thou wilt desire to have done and performed at thy hour of death; to which purpose read, and ponder well the eighth and ninth chapters of this first part.

CHAPTER VII.

The account Christians must yield to God, of the aforesaid duties and offices; as also of the majesty, severity, terror, and other circumstances of that reckoning-day; with two several times appointed for the purpose.

SECT. I.—*A point of great Wisdom.*

As in every office, and charge committed to a servant in this life, it is a principal point of wisdom, to consider and bear in mind, what account, and reckoning will be made thereof by him who placed him in that charge; as also what nature and disposition his master is of in taking his account; that is, whether the exact or remiss, facile or rigorous, mild or stern; and whether he has power to punish at his pleasure, if he finds him faulty; even so it behoves a careful Christian in the charge of his life and duty before mentioned and declared, very diligently to weigh and ponder with himself, what manner of reckoning his Lord and Saviour will require at his hands, and in what

terms, either of rigour or lenity, facility or severity, he will proceed with him in that account. Which thing, a prudent man may easily conceive, considering these two following points.

First, if we weigh the manner, order and circumstances, whereby his charge, that is, the law and rule of his conversation, was published and proclaimed by God to the world. Which thing is set out at large in the book of Exodus. *Exod.*

How the law of good life was published.

xix and xx. wherein is described with what marvellous, and dreadful majesty, fear, terror, thunder, and sound of trumpets, the ten commandments of God which contain the perfect form of a virtuous life, were pronounced by angels to the people of Israel. Which terror and majesty St. Paul applys expressly to this meaning, *Heb. xii.* that we should greatly tremble to violate or transgress this law, which was delivered with such circumstance of dread and horror; seeing that the laws of great princes and potentates, are exacted commonly and executed upon the offenders, with much more terror, than they were proclaimed.

Secondly, the same in part may be conceived, if we consider what judge or auditor we shall have in this account. Which St. Paul declares, plainly telling us: *2 Cor. v.* 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and that every one may receive, according as he hath done; whether it be good or evil,' while he lived upon earth. Which thing Christ himself confirms in divers parables, when he promises to take account of all his talents lent unto his servants in this world. And in St. Matthew's Gospel he expresses the particular manner of that account, saying: *Matt. xvi.* 'The son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels:' (to take account) 'and then will he render to every man according to his works.' And yet more particularly and severely of the same matter and day; *Matt. xii.* 'I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment.' By which speech of our Saviour we are admonished, not only that we shall give an account of our doings, but also that we shall yield the same to himself, who says in another place, *Jer. xxix.* *Ego sum Judex and Testis.* I am both Judge and Witness in this account. We are instructed also, that this

Who and what manner of auditor shall receive our accounts.

account will be most exact and exquisite, not omitting the least errors and offences that have passed in our life: that a particular reward or punishment will be assigned to each man, conformably to the quality of his account. And finally, that this account or day of reckoning, (to declare the terror and majesty that will be used therein) is called here by Christ, a judgment and tribunal, wherein sentence of life or death is to be pronounced.

Of which judgment or accounting day, the scripture notes unto us two kinds. The first whereof is called a particular judgment, it being exercised upon every soul immediately after her departure from the body, according to the words of holy St. Paul: *Heb. ix.* 'It is appointed for men once to

I.
Particular.

'die, and after this the judgment.' The second is called a general judgment, for it will be executed upon all the world together at the last day,

when mankind will be translated from this terrestrial habitation. And of this judgment are to be understood as well those former words of Christ, touching his coming in glory, as also infinite other places and passages of scripture, which do forwarn and admonish us of this most dreadful day. And although in the first particular judgment, each soul that departs hence, receives an irrevocable sentence, either of life or eternal death (as may appear by the examples of Lazarus, and of the rich glutton, *Luke xvi.* whereof the one was determined to everlasting repose, and the other to eternal torments, immediately upon their separation from this world) yet are there alledged by the holy saints of God, divers most clear and facile, and evident reasons who the Divine wisdom, besides that first private and particular day of trial, has ordained also this second, which will be public manifest, and universal.

II.
General.

Four reasons why there is a second Judgment.

The first, whereof is, that the body of man rising from his sepulchre at that day, may be partaker of eternal punishment or glory with the soul, even as in this life it was participant of the virtues or vices which the soul did exercise. The second reason is, because as Christ was contemptible in this world, and dishonoured publicly, and put to confusion with his Saints after him, in the sight of all men: so was it convenient that once in this world, he should show his

Power and Majesty, and that in the sight of all his creatures together, but especially of his wicked enemies, who after that day are never to see or behold him more. The third is, that both wicked sinners and blessed Saints of God, might receive their rewards and final payments openly, in the sight and hearing of each other, to the great heart-breaking and confusion of the impious, and triumphant joy of the virtuous, who commonly in this world, were contemned, overborne, and trodden down by the others. The fourth and last is, because men, when they die, do not commonly carry with them all the good or evil which they have wrought, having left behind them divers things which may increase their glory or torments after their death: as are their examples, their instructions given to others, their temporal faculties or abilities, books, preachings, and exhortations, and other like means, whereby good or evil may proceed after their departure. The reward whereof cannot so conveniently be assigned unto them whilst this world endures, because their joys or punishments in the places where they are, may be daily augmented, by the hurt or good that may be wrought in the world, by those means which they left behind them.

So divines do hold, for example sake, that the glory of St. Paul is increased daily in heaven, and will be to the world's end, by reason of them that daily do profit by his writings and rare example of life upon earth: as also on the contrary part, that the torments of Arius, Sabellius, and other wicked heretics, are continually augmented by the numbers of those, who from time to time are corrupted with their sedicious and pestilent writings. The like they hold of dissolute poets and other loose writers, who have left behind them lascivious, wanton, and carnal devices; as also of negligent parents, masters, or teachers who by their carelessness, and evil examples, gave occasion to corrupt the children, scholars, or servants committed to their government and instruction. But after this general day of judgment once passed, there will be no more place of meriting upon earth either good or evil; for the world then and there shall receive an end, and a final sentence be pronounced of whatsoever has passed from the first foundation, and establishment thereof.

O that men would consider well this reason.

Heretics.

Loose poets.

Evil parents.

Of this last and general judgment then, which contains a confirmation or ratifying of the particular judgment going before, as also a final conclusion and clearing of all accounts and reckonings with mankind, for their traffic and stewardship in their worldly pilgrimage; the holy scripture of God admonishes us most carefully, *Eccles. i.* to have continual remembrance and consideration, as of the greatest and most important business that ever we shall deal in, and as the most forcible means to restrain us from sin, that possibly may be devised among frail men in this life. For of this were uttered those words especially: *Eccles. vii.* ‘In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.’ Which holy David seemed to have experienced in himself, when he wrote as follows: I have observed the ways of my Lord, neither have I committed wickedness against my God; for that his judgments were always in my sight, and his justice I have not cast out of my mind. And (by these means) I shall be unspotted in his presence. and will keep myself from committing iniquity. Hence it is that the blessed prophet Moses, when he saw the people of Israel careless in committing sin, cried out in zeal: *Deut. xxxii.* ‘They are a nation without counsel and without wisdom. O! that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end.’ As though he would say, if they had so much wit as to consider this, and what account they must give to God, at the last day, of their doings; they would not offend him as they do. But as the scripture says in another place, for that this day of reckoning is deferred, and, *Eccles. viii.* ‘For because sentence is not speedily pronounced against the evil: the children of men commit evils without any fear.’ We have then to consider in this place, for our own instruction, and admonition in this life, what manner of accounting-day this will be, whose remembrance is so much and often commended unto us in holy scripture. For the better conceiving whereof we will divide the following part of this chapter into three principal heads or points. The first whereof shall be of preparations or preambles, assigned to go before this day. The second, of things that will pass and be executed at that day. The third of that which is to follow upon the sentence given and the judgment ended.

How necessary the remembrance is of the last day of Judgment.

Three chief points of this chapter.

SECT. II.—*Of preparations, before this general day of Judgment.*

CONCERNING the first, it is to be noted, that for greater dread and majesty of this terrible day, the eternal wisdom of Almighty God has ordained and revealed unto us, that before the coming thereof, when it approaches near, there shall appear most wonderful and horrible preparations, signs and tokens in the world. The first whereof will be the tumults and commotions of all nations, kingdoms, and people upon earth. Which our Saviour himself described, to his apostles; *Luke* xxi. when you shall hear the fame or rumour of wars and uproars, be not afraid; for these things must be, and yet presently the end of the world shall not ensue. One nation shall rise against another, and one kingdom shall impugn another: there shall be great earthquakes, pestilence and famine: most terrible signs and tokens from heaven. Upon which words of our Saviour, blessed St. Gregory has this discourse: * ‘The last tribulation must have many tribulations going before it; and by these manifold afflictions precedent, are declared the eternal afflictions that must ensue. And therefore Chsist, said after wars and uproars, the end should not immediately follow: because, it behoves, that many transitory calamities should go before, to denounce unto us the end—less woes which are to come after.’

These wars, tumults, and most dreadful confusions here signified by Christ, are specified more plainly in other places of holy writ, but especially by *Ezekiel*, *Ezek.* xviii. *Daniel*, *Dan.* vii. and St. John in his revelations. *Apoc.* xiii. Where it is prophecied, that a little before the last general day of Judgment, there shall be revealed the man of sin, called Antichrist: † who after the conquest of many kings and kingdoms, will make himself the monarch and absolute owner of the world; and will exercise upon good Christians more barbarous cruelties, and shed more innocent blood within the space of three years and a half, which will be the time of his outrageous tyranny, than all other enemies of God have done from the beginning. The matter is described most strangely by the prophet *Ezekiel*, in his twenty-eight and twenty-ninth chapters: where he

* *Greg. H m.* 13. in *Evang.* † See *St. Hierom. com. in. c. 7. Dan. in fine.*

mentions a most bloody battle to be fought by Jerusalem, wherein he says figuratively, that the weapons of such as should be slain will be sufficient to make fire for seven years after; and prophecies thus in the person of God, *Ezek. xxxviii.* I have spoken in my zeal, and in the fire of

A most wonder-ful prophecy of the slaughter to be committed by Antichrist. my wrath have I promised, that in the last days when *Gog* and *Magog* shall come into the world, (by these names are signified the army of Antichrist) there shall be a great commotion upon the earth, and the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and all that creep on the ground, together with all human generation, that lives upon the face of the earth, shall be in

an uproar before my face. Hills shall be overturned, hedges shall be broken down, and every strong wall shall fall to the ground. I will cast against them the sword from the tops of all mountains; and every man's sword shall be bent against his own brother. My judgment shall be in pestilence and blood, and vehement storms, and in huge stones that shall fall down: I will rain fire and brimstone, &c. And thou, son of man, tell unto all the fowls and birds of the air, and to all the ravenous beasts of the field, assemble yourselves, make haste, come together from all quarters to feed of the sacrifice which I shall prepare unto you, a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel. You shall eat the flesh of stout champions, and shall drink the blood of princes. You shall feed of their fat until you be cloyed, and you shall drink of their blood till you be drunk, you shall be filled at this my table, and all nations shall see this my judgment that I have exercised, and in what manner I have stretched out my potent hand upon them.

The two kinds of preparations. Thus much has the word of God, and much more (which for brevity I omit) of the great miseries and confusions that will be among men, some little time before the day of judgment.

Which time being expired, there shall ensue other preparations in the heavens, and elements of the world, much more dreadful than these; which by Christ himself, and his saints, are described in this manner. At this day there shall be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars. The sun shall be darkened; the moon shall give no light; the stars shall fall from the skies; and all the powers of heaven shall be moved. The firmament shall forsake its

situation with great violence, the elements shall be dissolved with heat; and the whole earth, with all that is in her, shall be consumed with fire. The firm land shall move and leave her place, and shall fly away like a dove; the pressure of all nations upon earth shall be estimable by reason of these things, and through the confusion of hideous noise from the sea, and floods: men shall wither away and dry up, for fear and expectation of the things, which at that day shall happen to the universal world.* Thus far out of the Gospel.

But St. John, the dearly beloved disciple of our Saviour, sets out the same more at large, according as it was revealed unto him, in this manner; *Apoc. vi.* I heard, (says he) as with a voice like the sound of thunder, saying, come thou and see; and I saw. And behold a white horse, and one that sat upon him had a bow: and he went to conquer. After which followed a black horse, and one that rid upon him had a pair of scales in his hand. After him passed forth a pale horse, and he that sat upon him, was called death, and hell followed after him; and he had authority given him to slay by sword, by death, and by the beasts of the earth. The earth did shake; the sun grew black like a sack; the moon like blood; the stars fell from heaven; the sky doubled itself like a folded book; every hill, and island was moved from its place; the kings of the earth and princes, and tribunes, and the rich and stout hid themselves, in dens, and in the rocks of hills. Then appeared seven angels with seven trumpets, and each one prepared himself to sound his blast. At the first sound, *Apoc. viii.* there came hail and fire mixt with blood. At the second a whole mountain of burning fire fell into the sea, wherewith the third part of the sea was made blood. At the third blast, there fell a great star from heaven, named Absinthium, burning like a torch, and infected the rivers, and fountain. At the fourth blast was struck down the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, and an eagle flew into the element, crying with a hideous voice, wo, wo, to all them that dwell upon the earth.

*A most
wonder-
ful reve-
lation of
St. John.*

*Death.
Hell.*

*Seven
trumpets
and seven
blasts.*

*Luke. xix. Matt. 24. Mark 13. and 2 Pet. 3

At the fifth sound *Apoc. ix.* fell another star from heaven, which had the key of the pit of hell: and he opened the pit, and there arose a smoke as from a great furnace, and there came out certain locusts like scorpions, who tormented all such as had not the mark of God in their foreheads. And

*Wonder-
ful lo-
custs.*

all these days men did seek death and could not find it. And those locusts were like barbed horses with crowns on their heads, their faces like men, their hair like women, their teeth like lions, and the noise of their wings like the noise of many chariots running together; their tails like scorpions, and their stings were in their tails; their king was an angel of hell named Abaddon, which signifies a destroyer. At the sixth blast of the trumpet, *Apoc. ix.* were loosed four angels tied before, and then rushed forth an army of horsemen, in number twenty thousand times ten thousand. And I saw the horses, and they that sat upon them had breast plates of fire and brimstone; the heads of these horses were as lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone, whereby they slew the third part of men which had not repented; and their strength was in their tails which were like serpents. Then there was an angel, *Apoc. x.* which putting one foot upon the sea, and another upon the land, did swear by him that lives for ever and ever, that after the blast of the seventh trumpet, there should be no more time. And so when the seventh angel had sounded, *Apoc. xi.* there came great voices from heaven, saying, the kingdom of this world is made to our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever.

*The sev-
en cups
of God's
wrath.*

And I heard a great voice saying to these seven angels, go, and pour out seven cups of God's wrath upon the earth, and so they did. And the first brought forth cruel wounds upon men. The second turned the sea into blood. The third turned the rivers and fountains into like blood. The fourth afflicted men with fire, and made them blaspheme God. The fifth made them eat their own tongues for sorrow. The sixth dried up the water. And I saw three foul spirits like frogs issue out of the mouth of a dragon. And finally the seventh cup being poured out, there came a mighty voice from the throne of God, saying: it is despatched. And there followed lightnings, and thunders and voices, and earthquakes, such as never were seen since men dwelt upon the

earth. Thus far this apostle, evangelist, and prophet, St John.

And now tell me, Christian, is it possible for any tongue, either human or angelical, to express a thing more forcibly than is here set down? what mortal heart can choose but tremble, even at the reading and remembrance only of these unspeakable and incomprehensible terrors? what manner of day will that be, think you, when the heavens will mourn, the whole earth will shake, the sun and moon lose their light, the stars fall down, the sea and floods forsake their channels and natural courses, all the elements be dissolved, the face of the earth overflowed with blood, and the universal world on a flaming fire? is it marvel now, if the scriptures avouch, *Sopho.* iii. and *Psalm lxxii.* that the just man and angels themselves will be afraid of that day? and then, to reason as St. Peter does, 1 *Peter* iii. if innocency and justice shall scarcely esteem themselves secure in that fearful trial, what will become of sin and iniquity? what will become, I say, of the careless and dissolute Christian, when he will see such a sea of miseries rush upon him? O that men would think upon this day while they have time! O that they would awake and prepare themselves by a virtuous life, to stand secure and confident at this woful hour! Who is there now a days who takes that care that St. Jerom,* who was wont to say (having much less cause than we) ‘That he did ‘ never eat, nor drink, nor sleep, nor take any other action ‘ in hand without the fearful remembrance of this accounting day.’ And this of the preparation. There follows the execution of things done in that judgment.

A consideration upon the premises.

SECT. III.—*Of things that must pass in this Judgment.*

WHEN the former preparation is fulfilled and finished, and the whole world brought to that pitiful state and plight which I have described, then as we gather out of scripture, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the tribes of the earth will see him coming in the clouds of heaven amidst all his angels, with much power and glory, in great authority and majesty. And there in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he will send his angels with a trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from the

* Hier. de reg. Monach. c. 22.

four parts of the world, even from Heaven to earth : Here is set down the first act of this dreadful judgment, which is the coming of the Judge to his throne and tribunal seat : so much the more terrible and full of majesty in this his second appearance, by how much more humble, poor, and contemptible he was, and despised in his first being upon earth, for the work of our redemption. So St. John affirmed, *Apoc.* v. and xiii. that he who was slain, as a lamb, should come again to judge, as a lion. Of which coming, the prophet Malachy's words are, *Mal.* iii. 'Behold, he cometh says the Lord of Hosts, and who shall be able to think of the day of his coming!' and the prophet Isaiah adds further touching the same coming, *Isaiah* lxiv. 'That the mountains 'would melt at his presence.' And yet further he describes the same in another place thus : *Isaiah* xxviii. 'Behold, the Lord is mighty and strong as a storm of hail : 'a destroying whirlwind, breaking and throwing down 'whatsoever stands in his way, as the violence of many 'waters overflowing and sent forth, &c.' Whereunto the prophet David annexes, *Psalm* xlix. 'A fire shall burn 'before him; and a mighty trumpet *shall be* round about him.'

This terrible Judge then being set, and all creatures of the world convened before him, the scripture relates us the order of that judgment described by Daniel : *Daniel* vii, 'I beheld till 'thrones were placed, and the ancient of days sat, &c. 'Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten 'thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him: the 'judgment sat, and the books were opened.' Thus much was revealed to Daniel, without declaration what books those were ; but to St. John the same were manifest, who expounded the matter thus ; *Apoc.* xx. 'I saw a great white 'throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose presence 'the earth and heaven fled away, &c. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened, &c and the idead were 'judged by those things which were written in the books 'according to their works.' By which words we are given to understand that the books which at that day will be opened, and whereby our cause must be discerned, will be the evidence of our deeds and actions in life, recorded in the testimony of our own consciences, and in the infallible memory of God's inscrutable wisdom. Whereunto

both heaven and earth, which were created for them, will give witness against the reprobate; the sun and moon, with all the stars and planets, which from the beginning of the world have served them; the elements and other creatures inordinately loved and abused by them; their companions there present with whom they sinned; their brethren whom they afflicted; the preachers and other saints of God whom they contemned; and above all other things, the ensign and standard of their redemption, I mean the triumphant Cross of Christ, which will at that day be erected in the sight of all the world. All these, I say, with infinite other things, will then bear witness against the wicked, and condemn them of intolerable ingratitude, in that they offended so gracious and bountiful a Lord, who by such manifold benefits allured them to love and serve him.

The store of witness against us at the last day.

At this day, says the wise man, *Sap. v.* shall the just stand in great constancy against those that have afflicted and oppressed them in this life. And the wicked seeing this, shall be surprised with a horrible fear, and shall say unto the hills, fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the indignation of the lamb; for that the great day of wrath is now come. O merciful Lord, how great a day of wrath will this be? how truly said the prophet in his meditation of this day? *Psal. lxxxix.* 'For in thy wrath we have fainted away:' (through fear) 'and are troubled in thy indignation.' This is that day of thine, whereof thy servant said so long before, *Prov. vi.* That thy zeal and fury shall spare none in this day of revenge, nor will yield to any man's prayers, nor will accept for satisfaction ever so many gifts, for the delivery of any man. This is that most dreadful day of thine, whereof thy holy prophet admonishes us when he said, *Isaiah* xiii. 'Behold, the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day, and full of indignation, and of wrath and fury, to lay the land desolate, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.' And another prophet of the self same day, *Joel ii.* 'Because the day of the Lord cometh, &c. a day of darkness and of gloominess; a day of clouds and whirlwinds, the like to it hath not been from the beginning, nor shall be after it even to the years of generation and generation.

The confidence of the good and terror of the wicked

The terrible day of God.

God's day. This is thy day, O Lord, and so properly thou wilt have it called ; as it pleases thy goodness to term the course of this present life, the day of man. For

Man's day. as in the time of this present world, thou art content to hold thy peace and be patient, and suffer sinners to do their will ; so at this last day thou wilt rise up and plead for thy own glory, and wilt make thyself known to the terror of thy enemies, according as thy servant David foretold of thee, when he said, *Psalm ix.* 'Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens : The Lord shall be 'known when he executeth judgments.' And moreover it is to be remembered, that all men, good and bad must see and be present at this day, and that none can be exempt : so that whosoever reads this must know, that he or she must see, or hear, and behold the same, and have their part, and lot therein.

A dreadful day. Good God ! what a marvellous day will this be when we shall see all the children of Adam gathered together from all corners and quarters of the earth ; when as St. John says, *Apoc. xx.* the sea and land will yield their dead bodies, and both hell and heaven restore the souls which they possess, to be united to these bodies ? What a wonderful meeting will this be, dear Christian, how joyful to the good, and how lamentable, doleful, and terrible to the wicked ! the godly and righteous being to receive the bodies wherein they lived, into the fellowship of their eternal bliss, will embrace them with all possible sweetness and delight, singing with the prophet, 'Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to 'dwell together in unity.' But the miserable damned spirits, beholding the carcasses, which were the instruments, and occasions of their sins ; and well knowing that their unspeakable torments will be increased by their mutual conjunction and association, will abhor, and utterly detest the same, and curse the day that ever they were acquainted together, inveighing most bitterly against

The complaints of the damned souls against the bodies. all the parts and senses thereof, as against the eyes, for whose curious delight so many vanities were sought ; the ears, for whose pleasure and dalliance so great variety of sweet sounds and melody was procured ; the mouth and taste, for whose contentment and fond satisfaction, innumerable delicacies were devised. And to be short, the back and belly, with other

sensual parts, for contentment of whose riotous voluptuousness ; both sea and land were sifted and turmoiled.

This will be the most sorrowful condition of these unfortunate souls at that day, but this sorrow will not avail them ; for the judgment must pass. *Matt. 25.* ‘ And then says the scripture, shall Christ separate the sheep from the goats, and shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.’ O most dreadful separation !

what would Alexander, Cæsar, Pompey, and other such potentates of the earth give at that day, to have but the lowest room among them of the right hand ? they, I say, who had all this world at their pleasure, and all dignities under their own command, would now make more account of the meanest place and corner among God’s elect, than of all the pomp and bravery of ten thousand worlds, if they were to live again : their cogitations at this day being far different from what they were upon earth, and their judgments wholly contrary. But, alas ! there is no time for alteration or amendment now. They must stand to that which is past, and according to their former demeanors they must receive their doom. They have a judge present, whose power they cannot avoid ; whose wisdom they cannot deceive ; whose equity they cannot corrupt ; whose severity they cannot mollify ; whose indignation they cannot appease : whose determination they cannot alter ; and from whose sentence they cannot possibly appeal.

*Too late
to repent
at the day
of Judgment.*

O my dear and loving brother, no tongue of man can express what a singular treasure a good conscience will be at this day, when thou shalt see all the princes and monarchs of this world stand there naked, trembling and pale ; being utterly destitute of an answer to the whole multitude of their most secret sins, displayed openly before their faces. An unspotted conscience I say, at this instant, will be a greater consolation, than all the dignities or pleasures of a thousand worlds. For wealth will not help ; the Judge will take no gifts ; our own submission will not be admitted ; intreaty of friends will not prevail ; intercession of angels and other saints will have no place ; for their glory at this day, will, as the prophet says, *Psalms* cxlix. ‘ be to bind their kings with fetters, and their nobles with manacles of iron, ‘ to execute upon them the judgment that is written.’ Alas ! what will all those delicate and dainty people do at this in

*The treasure of a
good conscience at
the day of
Judgment.*

stant, who live now in ease and pleasure, and can take no pains in the service of God, nor abide to hear the naming of this day? what shift, I say, will they find out in those extremities? whither will they turn? whose help will they crave? they will see all things cry vengeance round about them; all things yield them cause of fear and horror; but nothing, any sparkle of hope or consolation. Above them they will behold their Judge offended with their wickedness; beneath them hell open, and the cruel furnace ready boiling to receive them to torments. On the right hand will be their sins accusing them; on the left hand, the devils ready to execute God's eternal sentence on them; within them their own conscience gnawing; without them, all the damned souls bewailing; on every side the whole world burning.

O merciful *JESUS*, who art to behold this dismal spectacle; what a passage will this be? what will the wicked sinner do, say, or think, when he shall be environed with these inexplicable miseries? how will his heart sustain these anguishes? what way will he take? to go back is impossible: to go forward is intolerable; to stand there still is not permitted. What then shall he do? what thou O Lord, with thy sacred mouth has foretold; *Mark* xiv. and *Apoc.* vi. and ix. he shall dry and wither up for very fear; seek death, and death shall fly from him, cry and beseech the hills and mountains to fall down and cover him, and they refusing to give him that relief, or afford him so great a comfort, he shall stand there as a most desperate, forlorn and miserable captive, until he receives that dreadful and irrevocable sentence of thine; *Matt.* xxv. 'Go ye accursed into everlasting fire.'

SECT. IV.—*Of the final End, and that which will ensue.*

THIS will be the last act and conclusion of this woful tragedy. For so it is recorded by the Judge himself: *Matt.* xxv. 'Then shall the King say to them that shall be on his right hand: come ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, &c. And to them on his left hand he will say: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was pre-

‘pared for the devil, and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink; I was a stranger and you took me not in: naked and you clothed me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me.’ Then shall they also answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’ Then he shall answer them saying: ‘Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least ones (your brethren) neither did you do it to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting.’ Hitherto are the words of Christ himself.

In which may be noted, first, that in recounting the causes of the miserable men’s damnation our Saviour alledges no want of belief, or that they were not faithful; whereof the reason may be

Notes upon Christ’s last sentence.

that which himself utters in another place of infidels, saying, *John* iii. ‘He that doth not believe, is already judged.’ And St. Paul of a heretic: *Tit.* iii. That he is condemned, by his own judgment.’ Secondly, he objects not against them any actual enormous sins; whereof may be assigned for a reason, that which St. John insinuates and signifies, 1 *John* iii. and v. that such kind of manifest and deadly sinners are now evidently appertaining to the dominion of satan. Wherefore Christ urges only against these condemned people, certain omissions of good works and charitable deeds, commended unto us by the rule of Christian perfection.* And for these, he pronounces against them his most dreadful sentence of everlasting damnation. Which sentence being

**Mark well this point, O careless Christian.*

once passed the Judge’s mouth and received in the ears of all that infinite assembly there present, imagine thou my soul, what a universal shout and outcry will thereupon strait ensue. The saved rejoicing and singing eternal praises to the glory of their Saviour; the damned bewailing, blaspheming, and cursing the day of their nativity; the angels commending and extolling the equity of that judgment, against which the parties that are convicted will not be able to find the least exception. Consider the intolerable upbraiding of those most insolent infernal spirits, against the miserable condemned souls that are delivered to their

The cry and shout upon the Judge’s sentence.

prey ; with how bitter scoffs and taunts will they trail them to their torments ? with what intolerable insults will they execute the sentence of God against them ? consider the eternal separation that now must be made between fathers and children, mothers and daughters, friends and companions ; the one to glory, the other to misery, without any hope ever to hear or see any more the one or the other. And that which will be as great a grief as any of the rest ; the son or daughter going to rest and joy, will not take pity of their own parents or friends that are carried to calamity ; but rather will rejoice thereat, because it redounds to God's glory, for execution of his justice, though perhaps they were the occasion or material cause of the others damnation.

O my soul ! which now art here considering these things afar off, and then will be present to see them actually before thy eyes : what a doleful separation will this be ? what a parting ? whose heart would not break at that day to

The vanity of all worldly preferments at the last. abide this intolerable separation ? O ! if a heart could then break, and make some end of his pains ! but so much ease will not be permitted. O ye children and lovers of this world where will all your delights and recreations, and vanities be at this day ? all your pleasant pastimes ! all your

pride and bravery in apparel ? your glittering in gold ? your sweet savours of perfumes ? your honours ? your adulation of flatterers ? your delicate fare and dainty dishes ? your music ? your wanton dalliances and pleasant entertainments ? where are all your friends and merry companions, accustomed to laugh and sport the time with you ? all now gone ! O vanity of vanities ! now when you have most need of them, they are furthestest off from you, and the remembrance thereof will do nothing but torment you. O my dear brethren ! how sour will all the pleasures past of this world seem at that hour ? how doleful will the thoughts thereof be unto us ? how frivolous a thing will all our dignities, riches, offices, and other preferments appear wherein we take such excessive delight now, and do weary our spirits to gain the same ? and on the contrary, how joyful will that man be at this instant, who has attended to lead a virtuous life, in resisting sin, and doing good works, although it were with much pain and contempt in this world ? he will be a most happy creature for having took to

that path; and no tongue, but God's can express his happiness.

Wherefore my loving brother, to make an end here, and to frame no other conclusion of all this whole declaration, than that which Christ himself does make unto us (who being the chief actor that will deal in this affair, knows best what council to give) let us consider with ourselves, even in the very bottom of our hearts how easy a matter it is now in this life, with a little diligence, to avoid the danger of this most dreadful day. For which cause also it is most certain, that the same is foretold us, and so often urged in holy writ for our remembrance, as in like manner, so particularly described by our most merciful Judge and Saviour, to the end we should, by these severe and earnest admonitions, be stirred up to prepare ourselves for it. So Christ himself does most evidently declare, when after all his former threatenings he concludes in these most sweet words of exhortation, *Mark* xiii. 'Watch ye therefore, for you know not, when the Lord of the house cometh, and what I say to you, I say to all, watch.' And yet further in another place he adjoins, *Luke* xxi. 'Take heed to yourselves lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly, &c.' 'Watch ye therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and stand before the son of man.'

The conclusion of the whole chapter with a forewarning.

These are the words, and forewarnings of thy Judge and Saviour unto thee my soul. And what more friendly and fatherly exhortation couldst thou desire? If thou think so, hear yet a further admonition, of his chief apostle, *2 Pet.* iii. 'The day of the Lord, says he, shall come as a thief, (when men think not of it) in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be dissolved with heat, and the earth, and the works that are in it, shall be burnt. Seeing then that all these things are to be dissolved, what manner of people ought you to be, in holy conversation and godliness, waiting for and hastening unto the coming of the day of our Lord, &c.' In which words of St. Peter, it is diligently to be noted,

The sweet and fatherly dealing of Christ with us.

*How we
may go
and meet
with the
day of
Judgment.*

that this meeting with the day of judgment, whereunto he exhorts us, is nothing else but the due examination of our whole life, as to the works of piety and conversation, which indeed is that only sovereign remedy of which the wise man forewarns us, when he says, *Eccl.* xviii. ‘Before sickness, take a medicine, and before judgment examine thyself, and thou shalt find mercy in the sight of God.’ Whereunto St. Paul well agrees, saying : ‘if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.’ But seeing few men enter into this due judgment of themselves, their life, state, and actions ; hence it comes to pass, that so few do prevent this dangerous day ; so few prepare themselves : so few accept of the good counsel of Christ ; so few are watchful, and so many sleep in ignorance of their own peril, to their irremediable destruction and unavoidable damnation. Our blessed Lord give us his holy grace to look better about us.

CHAPTER VIII

Of the nature of Sin, and of the malice of him that commits the same and perseveres therein. For the justifying the severity of God’s judgments, of which we have spoken in the foregoing chapter.

To the end that no man may justly complain of the severe account which God is to take of us at the last day, or of the rigour of his judgment, set down in the foregoing chapter ; it will not be amiss to consider in this place, the cause why God does show such severity against sin and sinners ; as may appear that he does, both by that which has been said, as also by the whole course of holy scripture ; where almost in every place, he denounces his great hatred, wrath, and indignation against the same ; as where it is said of him, *Psalms* v. ‘That he hates all those that work iniquity.’ And again, *Sap.* xiv. ‘That both the wicked man and his wickedness are hateful in his sight.’ And that which is yet more, he cannot abide or permit the sinner, *Eccl.* xv. ‘To praise him, or to name his testament with his mouth,’ as the Holy Ghost testifies ; and therefore no marvel if he shows such severity against him at the last day, whom he so hates and abhors in this life, while he continues his sinful course, and repents not.

Of which hatred and aversion, there may be many reasons alledged; as the undutiful transgression and contempt of God's commandments; the great ingratitude of a sinner in respect of his divine benefits, and the like which sufficiently justify his indignation and severe hatred against them. But there is one reason above all the rest, which opens the very fountain, and origin of the matter; and this is the most grievous injury done unto Almighty God in every mortal sin that we commit: which indeed is so great an injury, that no worldly potentate could bear the same at his subjects hands, and much less God himself, being the omnipotent Lord of all glory and majesty, may in reason, let pass unpunished an outrage so often iterated against him, as is sin daily committed by the wicked.

The reason why God so hates sinners.

For the better understanding of which injury, we are to consider, that every time we commit a mortal sin, there does pass through our heart and mind, though we mark it not, a certain practical discourse of our understanding, and will, as there does also in every other election, whereby we lay before us on the one side, the seeming advantage of that sin which we are tempted to commit; that is to say, the pleasure which allures us thereunto: and on the other part the offence of God, which is the losing of his grace, and friendship by that sin, if we yield unto it. And thus having as it were, the balance there before us, and setting God in one end thereof, and in the other the aforesaid pleasure, we stand in the midst deliberating and examining in a certain manner, the value and weight of both parts; and finally, do make choice of the pleasure, and reject almighty God: that is we choose rather to lose the favour of God, together with his grace, and whatsoever he is worth besides, than to want that pleasure, and delectation of sin. Now then, what can be more opprobrious, and horrible than this? what can be more reproachful to God, than to prefer a most vile pleasure before his infinite majesty? is not this far more intolerable than the disgrace offered him by the Jews, when they made choice of Barabbas the murderer, and rejected Jesus their Saviour? surely, how heinous soever the son of the Jews was, yet in two points this does seem to exceed it. First, because the Jews knew not whom they refused in their choice, as we do. Secondly, because they refused Jesus but once, whereas we refuse

The injury done to God by sin.

him both daily, and hourly, whensoever in our hearts we give consent to mortal sin.

And is it marvel then, that God deals so severely, and sharply with sinners in the world to come, who do use him so opprobriously and contemptuously in this life; undoubtedly the malice of a sinner is great towards God, and he does not only dishonor him by contempt of his commandments, and by preferring most vile, and base delectations before him; but further also, if the matter be looked into, bears a secret hatred, and grudge against his majesty; and would, if it lay in his power, endeavour to pull him out of his seat, or at least, wishes in his heart that there were no God at all to punish sin after this present life. Let every sinner examine the bottom of his conscience in this point, to see whether he could not be content, if there were no immortality of the soul, no reckoning after this life, no judge, no punishment, no hell, and consequently no God at all, to the end he might the more securely enjoy his pleasure.

And because God, who searches the heart and reins, sees well this most undutiful and traitorous affection towards him, lurking within the bowels of sinful men, how smooth soever their words may be, hence it comes that in the whole course of holy scripture,* he denounces them for his enemies, and professes open war and hostility against them. And then imagine, what a pitiful case these unfortunate men are in (being but silly worms and wretches of the earth) when they have so suissant an enemy to fight against them, as does make the very heavens to tremble at his look.† And yet that the case is so, hear what himself says, what he threatens, what he thunders out against them. After he had by the mouth of Isaiah the prophet repeated many sins abominable to his sight, as the taking of bribes, oppressing of poor people, and the like; he defies the doers thereof, as his open enemies saying, *Isa. i.* ‘Therefore saith the Lord the God of Hosts, the mighty one of Israel; Ah! I will comfort myself over my adversaries: and I will be revenged of my enemies.’ And the prophet David, as he was a man in the most high favor with God, and made

The malice of a sinner towards God.

Sinners, enemies to God, and God to them.

* Sap. i. Hier. xi. and 17 Apoc. ii. † Rom. v. James iv. 1. John iii.

privy to his secrets above many others, so he, more than any other does express this severe meaning of God, and infinite displeasure against sinners: calling them his enemies, vessels of his wrath, and ordained to eternal ruin and destruction; and complains that the world will not believe this point. *Psalm. xci.* ‘The senseless man (says he) shall not know: nor will the fool understand these things.’ And what is this, O holy prophet? it follows, ‘When the wicked, &c. and all the workers of iniquity (shall appear in the world) they may perish for ever and ever.’ And what is the reason of this? He answers immediately, ‘For behold thy enemies, O Lord, for behold thy enemies shall perish: and all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.’ Whereby we see that all sinners are enemies to God, and God to them, as also upon what ground and reason.

But yet, for the further justifying of God’s severity, let us consider in what measure his hatred is towards sin; how far it proceeds; within what bounds it is comprehended; or whether it has any limits or bounds at all, or rather is infinite and without limitation. And to utter the matter, as in truth it stands, if all the tongues in the world were made one tongue, and all the understandings of all creatures (I mean of Angels and men) were made one understanding, yet, could neither this tongue express, nor this understanding conceive, the great hatred which God bears towards every mortal sin which we commit. And the reason thereof is evident in two points; first, because God by how much more he is better than we are, by so much more than we do, he loves goodness and hates sin: and because he is infinitely good, herefore his love to goodness is infinite, and his hatred to evil infinite: and consequently, his rewards are also to them infinite and endless, the one in hell, with everlasting misery; the other in heaven, by eternal felicity.

Secondly, we see by experience, that how much more great and worthy the person is, against whom an offence, is committed, so much greater is always the offence; as for example, the self-same blow, or injury offered to a bond-slave, and to a prince, differs greatly in quality, and in the nature of offence, and consequently, deserves far different hatred and punishment. And because, every mortal sin which we

God's hatred is infinite against sin and why.

Why every sin deserves infinite punishment

commit, is done directly against the person of God himself, whose dignity is infinite : therefore, the offence or guilt, of every such sin, is infinite, and consequently deserves infinite hatred and infinite punishment at God's hands. Hence follows the reason of divers things both said and done by God in the scriptures, and taught by divines, touching the punishments of sin, which seems very strange unto the wisdom of the world, and indeed to them scarce credible. As first of all, the most dreadful punishment of eternal and

The punishment of angels.

irrevocable damnation of so many thousands, or rather millions of angels, that were created to glory, with almost infinite perfection, and that for one only sin, but one committed, and that in thought, as divines are of opinion.

Of Adam and Eve.

Secondly, the rigorous punishment of our first parents Adam and Eve, and all their posterity, for their disobedience ; for which fault, besides the chastising the offenders themselves, and all the creatures of the earth for the same, and all their children and offspring after them, both before our redemption and after (for although we are delivered from the guilt of that sin, yet temporal punishments do remain upon us for the same, as hunger, thirst, cold, sickness, death, and a thousand other miseries) besides also the almost infinite number of souls damned, before the coming of Christ for the space of four thousand years, as also, since, as well infidels, which are not baptized, as others ; besides all this, I say, (which in man's reason may seem severe enough) God's wrath and justice, could not be sufficiently satisfied except his only son had come down into the world, and taken our flesh upon him, and by his pains and death made satisfaction to the same.

The value of Christ's satisfaction.

And when he was now come into the world, and had in our flesh subjected himself unto his father's justice ; although the love his father bears unto him is infinite, and every little pain that he endured for us, and every drop of blood which he shed for our cause, had been sufficient for the whole satisfaction (because his flesh being united to his god-head, made every such satisfactory action of his infinite in value and merit, and consequently of infinite satisfaction, correspondent to the infinity of our first parents sin) yet to the and that God might show the greatness of his hatred and justice against the said sin, and all others, he never ceased

to add affliction to affliction, and to heap torments upon the body and flesh of his most dear and blessed son, until he had brought him unto that most rueful plight, that his flesh being all mangled and most lamentably torn in pieces, retained not one drop of blood within it. He spared him not even then, when he beheld him sorrowful unto death, and bathed in that agony of blood, when he heard him utter those most dolorous and compassionate speeches: *Matt.* xxvi. ‘ Oh my father if it be possible, let this cup pass from ‘ me’ and after that again, much more lamentably upon the cross: (*Matt.* xxii.) ‘ Oh my God! why hast thou forsaken me,’ notwithstanding all which cries, and lamentations, his most merciful father loving him as he did, would not deliver him; but for the satisfaction of his justice, laid on him stripe upon stripe, pain upon pain, torment after torment, until he had rendered up his life and soul, into his said father’s hands, which is a wonderful, and dreadful document of God’s hatred against sin, for our example.

I might here mention the sins of *Esau*, *Gen.* xxv. & xxvii. in selling his inheritance for a little meat: of which St. Paul says, *Heb.* xii. ‘ He ‘ found no place of repentance, although with ‘ tears he had saught it.’ I might also mention *Of Saul.* the sin of *Saul*,* who for not killing *Agag* the king of *Amalek*, and his cattle, as he was ordered, was utterly cast off by God though he was his anointed, and chosen servant before, and could never get remission thereof; although both he and *Samuel*, God’s holy prophet, did greatly lament, and bewail, and make intercession in that behalf.

In like manner I might alledge the axample of king *David*,† whose two sins though God forgave upon his hearty repentance, yet, notwithstanding the said repentance and sorrow, and all the weeping, fasting, watching, lying on the ground, wearing of sack-cloth, and other corporal chastisements, which this holy prophet records that himself did put in use: God punished him with marvellous severity, by the death of his dearly beloved child, and by many other continual afflictions and temporal punishments during the course of his whole life. And all this to show his hatred against sin, and thereby to terrify us from cimmitting the same.

* 1 Reg. 15 & 16. 1 Reg. 9 & 15 & 16. † 2 Reg. 12 Psalm 9. 36. 68. 103. 101. 29

From this also do proceed all those hard and severe speeches of holy writ touching sinners, which coming from the mouth of the Holy Ghost (and therefore no doubt, both true and certain) may justly yield great cause of fear to all such as live in a sinful state: as for example, where it is said, *Eccli.* xl. ‘Death, and bloodshed, strife and sword, oppressions, famine, and affliction, ands courges; All these things are created for the wicked, and for their sakes came the flood.’ And again, *Psalms* x. ‘He shall rain snares upon sinners; fire and brimstone, and storms of winds *shall be* the portion of their cup.’ And yet further in many other places, these and the like most dreadful speeches and comminations are to be found. ‘The Lord shall be known when he executed judgment: the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands. Many whips belong unto a sinner—The wicked shall be turned into hell.—God shall scatter all sinners, and shall break in pieces their teeth in their mouth. God shall scoff at a sinner when he sees his day of destruction come on.—The sword of sinners shall turn into their own hearts.—The arms of sinners shall be crushed and broken, and they shall wither and dry up like hay from the face of the earth; desire not the glory and riches of a sinner, for thou dost not know the sudden subversion which shall come upon him, for God has given him riches to deceive him therewith. Behold, the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day, and full of indignation, wrath and fury, to make desolate the earth, and to crush in pieces her sinners within her. Then shall the just man rejoice, seeing this revenge, and shall wash his hands in the blood of sinners.’ These, my brother, and innumerable other such sentences of scripture, pronounced by the holy spirit of God against sinners, may instruct us of the pitiful state, and of the unspeakable hatred of his divine majesty against them, as long as they persist in their sinful life and conversation.

Out of all which considerations, the self-same holy scriptures do gather certain conclusions greatly to be observed. Whereof the first and most general is, that sin brings all people to misery. Secondly, and more particularly, that he who loves sin, hates his own soul. Or as the angel Raphael utters the same in other words; *Tob.* xii. ‘They that commit sin and iniquity, are enemies to their own

‘souls.’ Wherefore they lay down to all men this general, severe, and most necessary commandment, under menace of incurring all the pains before recited: *Eccles. xxi.* ‘Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent,’ And again; *Tob. iv.* ‘Take heed thou never consent to sin.’ For howsoever the world may make little account of this matter, by whom, as the scripture notes, *Psalms ix.* ‘The sinner is praised in the desires of his soul, and the unjust man is blessed’ for his wickedness; yet most certain it is (for the spirit of God avouches it) *1 John iii.* ‘That he who commits sin, is of the devil,’ and therefore is to receive his portion among devils, and damned spirits at the latter day.

And is not all this sufficient, most dear brother, to breed in us a detestation of sin, with fear, and horror to commit the same? is not this of force, and strength sufficient to shake the hearts of them that wallow perpetually in the filth of sin and do commit the same daily without scruple, remorse, or consideration? what desperate obstinacy, and obduration is this? surely we find now by experience, that the Holy Ghost prophesied very truly of these men, when he said *Psalms lvii.* ‘Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent: like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears: Which will not hear the voice of the charmers.’ This fury, I say, is the fury or madness of wilful sinners, who stop their ears like serpents to all the holy enchantments that God can use for their conversion; that is, to all his internal motions, and good inspirations: to all the remorse of their own consciences; to all the threatenings of holy scriptures; to all admonishments of God’s servants; to all examples of virtuous livers; to all the punishments that light upon the wicked; and to all the other means which God uses for their salvation.

Good God, what man would commit a mortal sin, for the gaining of ten thousand worlds, if he considered the infinite damages, hurts, inconveniences, and miseries, which follow the committing thereof? For first, whosoever sins mortally, loses the grace of God inherent in his soul, which is the greatest gift that can be given to man in this life; and consequently he loses all those things which did accompany that grace; as are the infused virtues and the seven gifts

The obstinacy of sinners.

The losses that come by every mortal sin.

of the Holy Ghost, whereby the soul was beautified in the sight of her spouse, and armed against all assaults of her ghostly enemies. Secondly, he loses the favour of God, and consequently his fatherly protection, care, and providence over him; and forces him to be his professed enemy. Which how great a loss it is, we may esteem in part, by the state of a worldly prince's servant and favourite, who being in high esteem and credit with his sovereign, should by some great offence lose all his favour at one instant, and incur his mortal hatred and displeasure.

Thirdly, he loses all his inheritance, claim and title to the kingdom of heaven, which is due only by grace, as St. Paul notes well; *Rom. vi.* and consequently he deprives himself of all his dignities and advantages depending thereupon in this life; as are the condition and high privilege of being the Son of God: the communion of saints; the protection of holy angels, and the like. Fourthly, he loses the quiet, joy, and tranquillity of a good conscience, and all the favours and comforts wherewith the Holy Ghost is wont to visit the minds of the just. Fifthly, he loses the merit and reward of his good works done all his life before and whatsoever he does or will do, while he continues in that miserable and sinful state. Sixthly, he makes himself guilty of eternal punishment, and enrolls his name in the book of perdition; and consequently, binds himself to all those miseries and inconveniences whereunto the reprobate are subject; that is to say, to be an inheritor of hell and damnation; to be in the power of the devil and his angels; to be a slave to sin, and every temptation thereof, and his soul (which was before the temple of the Holy Ghost, the habitation of the blessed Trinity, the spouse of God, and place of repose for holy angels to visit) now to be a den of dragons, and a nest of scorpions, a dungeon of devils, a sink of all filth and abomination, and himself a companion of the miserable damned spirits.

Lastly, he abandons Christ, and announces all *The losing of Christ by sin.* the interest, and portion he had with him, treading him under his feet, defiling his most precious blood, and crucifying him, again, as St. Paul says, in that he sins against him, who died for sin, and makes himself a persecutor of his redeemer. For which cause the same apostle pronounces a most dismal and heavy sentence against such men in these words: *Heb. x.* 'If we sin wilfully after having received the knowledge of

‘ the truth, there is now left no sacrifice for sins, but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment, and the rage of a fire which shall consume the adversaries.’ To which St. Peter agrees, when he says; *2 Pet. ii.* ‘ For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them.’

This being so, let sinful worldlings go now and solace themselves in their vanities, and wanton-*Vain excuses of sin*ness, as much as they will. Let them excuse and pleasantly defend the same, by saying: pride is but a point of honor: gluttony, good fellowship; anger and revenge, but an effect of courage; lechery, and wantonness, a trick of youth: they shall one day find, that these excuses will not be received, but rather that all such pleasant devices and joys will be turned into tears, all such fond conceits into doleful lamentations. They will find to their great cost, that God will not be jested with, but that he is the same God still, and will ask as severe an account of them, as he had done of others before, although now it pleases them not to keep any account at all of their life and actions; but rather to turn all to sport and pleasure, persuading themselves, that howsoever God has dealt before with others, yet unto them he will pardon all. But this is a mere madness, a voluntary deluding of ourselves. For God himself by his sacred word instructs us to reason after another fashion, which I will here briefly touch, exhorting every prudent Christian seriously to examine the same in his own case.

At that time the great apostle of the Gentiles, *The reasoning of St. Paul.* St. Paul, took upon him to make a comparison between the grievous sins of his nation the Jews, for which they were rejected, and made reprobate by God, and those which Christians do commit after their redemption; he framed this collection concerning God’s justice due unto them both, saying: *Rom. xi.* ‘ If God hath not spared the natural branches: *fear* lest he spare not thee,’ which are but an inserted graft. Where he gives this admonition; *Noli altum sapere, sed time.* Be not high minded, but fear. Again he reasons thus upon the old and the new law. *Heb. x.* ‘ A man making void the law of Moses, dieth without any mercy under two or three witnesses: how much more do you think he deserved worse punishments, who

Christians more punished for sin than Jews.

‘ (breaking the law of Christ by wilful sin) hath trodden under foot the son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean, with which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the spirit of grace.’ St. Peter and St. Jude discourse after the like manner touching the sin of the angels, and ours* ‘ If God spared not the angels that sinned, but having cast them down into the place of torments delivered them into the chains of hell to be tormented, to be reserved unto judgment.’ How much less will he spare us? And again, ‘ if the angels (who surpass us in power and strength) kept not their principality, but forsook their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day;’ what shall we do? And yet further in another place, the same apostle reasons thus: 1 *Pet* iv. ‘ If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked man and sinner appear?’

By all which examples, we are instructed, how to reason maturely and sincerely in our own cause. As for *A good manner of reasoning.* each man may truly say thus unto himself: if God has punished so severely one sin in the angels, in Adam, and in others before recited: what shall I look for, who have committed so many sins against him? If God has damned so many souls for lesser sins than mine are; what will he do to me for mine, that are far greater? If God has borne longer with me, than he has with many others, whom he has cut off, without giving them time of repentance; what reason is there, that he should bear longer with me? If David and others, after their sins forgiven, took such pains in afflicting themselves, to satisfy by their temporal punishment in this life; what punishment remains for me, either here or in the world to come, for satisfaction of so many sins committed? if it be true what our Saviour says: ‘ That the way is strait, and the gate narrow, whereby men go into heaven, and that they shall answer for every idle word before they enter therein.’ What shall become of me that do live so easy a life, and do keep no account of my deeds, and much less of my words? if good men in old times did take such pains for their salvation, and yet, as St. Peter says, the very just

* 2 Peter 4. Ep. Jude 6

are hardly saved ; what state am I in, who take no pains at all, and do live in all kinds of pleasure and worldly contentments.

These arguments, consequences, and conclusions, are true, good Christian, and would prove more profitable to us, if we would exercise ourselves therein, and thereby enter into some thoughts of our own danger, and a just fear of God's severe judgments, without flattering or deceiving ourselves. For want thereof, either only or principally, the most part of enormous sins from time to time are committed, according as holy David most evidently declares, when having showed and detested the multitude of sins which the world commits ; he reduces all, as it were, to two principal causes. Whereof the first is, that men deceive themselves and others, by vain flattery, in diminishing their sins ; of whom he says ; *Psalm ix.* ' They are caught in the ' counsels which they devise : For the sinner is praised in ' the desires of his soul : and the unjust man is blessed.' The second is, because this deceit and flattery is referred commonly by the vicious man, to the driving of God's judgments out of his memory, to the end he may sin with less fear and scruple. For so says the prophet expressly ; *Psalm x.* ' The sinner hath provoked the Lord, according ' to the multitude of his wrath he will not seek him.' But what effect ensues of this ? ' God is not before his eyes ; his ' ways are filthy at all times.' And what is the cause of all this ? because the judgments of God are removed from his sight ; that is, because he will not consider or bear in mind thy judgments, O Lord, but will needs flatter, delude, and deceive himself. Hence it comes, that he never makes an end of his filthy life and wicked ways, but exasperates thy justice, O Lord, against him, till it be over-late to repent or amend.

Thus said this holy saint, of wicked sinners : but what of himself ? hear his words, dear brother, and imprint them in thy memory : *Psalm xvii.* ' I have kept the ways of the ' Lord (says he) and have not done wickedly ' against my God ; for all his judgments are in ' my sight : and his justices I have not put away ' from me.' Behold the virtuous life of King David, and behold the cause thereof, for that God's judgments were continually before his eyes ;

Two principal causes of deceiving ourselves.

The remembrance of God's judgments the cause of virtue.

therefore was his life pure, and void of wickedness, or, as in other words, at another time he expresses: *Psalm cxviii.* ‘I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned the judgments of thy justice.’ And again in the same place; ‘I have chosen the way of truth, thy judgments I have not forgotten:’ that is, as a little after he expounds the same. ‘For I am afraid of thy judgments.’ O most excellent effect of the fear of God’s judgments! no marvel it is called the beginning of all wisdom, and the very door and entrance to eternal salvation: no marvel if the same holy prophet in the very same psalm prays so heartily: ‘Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear, O Lord.’

St. Paul after he had shown to the Corinthians, that we must all be present before the tribunal of Christ, every man to receive according to his merits; concludes to this purpose. Knowing therefore these things we persuade the fear of our Lord unto all men. And St. Peter having a long declaration of the majesty of God and of Christ now reigning in heaven, concludes thus: *1 Peter i.* ‘If you invoke the father, him who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every one’s work, converse in fear during the time of your sojourning here.’ A necessary lesson, no doubt, for all men, but especially for such, who, by reason of their sinful life, do remain in the displeasure and hatred of Almighty God, and hourly do stand obnoxious as I have showed to the severity of his most dreadful judgments. Whereunto if once they fall (especially by departure from this life) the matter remains remediless for all eternity ensuing, as God himself has forewarned us. Which thing being so, what man of wisdom would not fear? what Christian that is careful of his own state, would eat or drink, or take his repose with quiet, till by hearty repentance, and other such means of holy sacraments, as God has left for this purpose in his Church, he had discharged his conscience of the burden of sin, and made an atonement between his soul and Saviour? O merciful Lord, how dangerous is his state, till he has done it? how many ways may he fall in those heavy hands of his eternal Judge, whereof, St. Paul, *Heb. x.* conceived horror in the very thinking on it? One little stone falling from the top of the house as he passes by; one slip of his horse as he rides; one assault of an enemy, when he thinks not of him; one poor ague by a sur-

*How the
Apostles
did per-
suade us to
fear.*

feit, or other distemper ; one sudden mischance of a million that may happen to him, is able to bereave him of this life, and to cast him into those terms of everlasting calamity, from whence the whole world is not able to deliver him. And is not this then a matter to be feared ? is not this a case to be prevented ? O how truly says the holy scripture ! *Prov. xxviii.* ‘ Blessed is the man, that is always fearful, ‘ but he that is hardened in mind shall fall into evil.’

Our Lord God, of his mercy, give us his holy grace to fear him as we should, and to make such account of his judgments and justice, as by threatening the same, he would have us to do, for the avoiding of sin. And then we shall not delay the time, but shall resolve ourselves to serve him whilst he is content to accept of our service, and to pardon us all our offences, if we would once firmly make this resolution from our heart. For better effectuating whereof, I beseech thee, gentle reader, to peruse with some attention the fifth and seventh chapters of the second part of this book, which give many notable examples of resolutions in others, and no fewer reasons, and arguments against delay and procrastination in thyself.

CHAPTER IX.

Another consideration for the further justifying of God’s judgments, and manifestation of our grievous offences. Taken from the inestimable majesty of him whom we offend: and from the innumerable benefits which he has bestowed upon us.

SECT. I. *Of the inestimable Majesty of God.*

ALTHOUGH the most part of Christians, by reason of their wicked life, arrive not at that state wherein the holy David was, when he said to God, *Psalm cxviii.* 39. ‘ Thy judgments are delightful ;’ as indeed they are to all those that live virtuously, and have the testimony of a good conscience, yet at least, that we may be forced to confess with the same prophet, *Psalm xviii.* ‘ That the judgments of ‘ the Lord are true, justified in themselves :’ I have thought expedient to add a reason or two more in this chapter, whereby it may appear how great our offence is, in sinning against God as we do ; and how righteous his judgments and justice are against us for the same

The majesty of God. *

And first of all, the majesty of him against whom we sin is to be considered. For most certain it is, as I have noted before, that every offence is so much greater, and more grievous, by how much greater and more noble the person is, against whom it is done, and the party offending more base, and vile. And in this respect almighty God, to terrify us from offending him, names himself oftentimes with certain great, and dreadful titles of majesty: As to Abraham, *Gen. xvii.* 'I am the almighty God.' And again to Isaiah, *Isa. lxiv.* 'Heaven is my seat and the earth is my footstool.' And at another time he commanded Moses to bear to the people in his name, this embassy: *Deut. x.* 'Stiffen your neck no more. Because the Lord your God he is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, a great God and mighty, and terrible, who accepteth no person nor taketh bribes.'

First then, I say, consider, gentle Christian, of what an infinite majesty he is, whom thou, a poor worm of the earth hath so often and so contemptuously offended in this life. We see in this world that no man dares to offend openly, or say one word against the majesty of a temporal prince, at least in his presence, and within his own dominions: But what is the majesty of all earthly princes put together, if it be compared with the thousandth part of God's incomparable and inestimable majesty? who with one word made both heaven and earth, and all creatures therein, and with half a word could annihilate and destroy the same again. Whom all the creatures which he made, both angels, heaven, stars and elements, do serve at a beck, and dare not once offend. And under whom, as holy Job says, *Job ix.* 'they stoop that bear up the world.' The sinner alone emboldens himself against this majesty and fears not to offend the same: whom (*as the holy Catholic Church does profess daily, in her preface to the blessed sacrifice) the angels, the dominations, the powers, together with cherubims and seraphims, thrones, and all other multitudes of celestial spirits, continually praise with hymns of glory.

Remember then, dear Christian, that every time thou dost commit a capital sin, thou givest, as it were a blow in

* See Cyril Catech. Myst. 5. Chrys. hom. 26, in Gen. ir sin. Cle 1
1. c 10.

the face to this great God of eternal majesty, who inhabiteth, as St. Paul describes, 1 *Tim.* xvi. ‘light inaccessible whom no man hath seen, nor can see.’ Whereof St. John the Evangelist gives good testimony by his own experience. *Apoc.* vii. who, notwithstanding he was an apostle, and most dearly beloved by his God and Master; yet when Christ appeared to him after his resurrection with certain sparkles only of his dreadful glory, uttering words of most sweet consolation unto him, he was for all that, so astonished and oppressed with fear, that he fell down dead, as himself confesses, till the same Lord and Master vouchsafed to raise him up again. The like trial of this inexplicable majesty, had Moses the familiar friend and trusty servant of God, who after many conferences, desiring once in his life to see him whose words he had so often heard, made humble petition for the same: but God answered, ‘That no man might see him and live.’ Yet notwithstanding, to satisfy his request, and to show him in part what a terrible and majestic God he was, he promised Moses that he should see some part of his glory; although he added, that it was needful he should hide himself in the hole of a rock, and be covered with God’s own hand for his defence, whilst he, or rather his angel, as divines do interpret, did pass by in glory. Who being once past, God removed his hand, and suffered Moses, *Exod.* xxxiii. to behold the hinder parts only of the angel, which was notwithstanding, most terrible and dreadful. The like or greater terror had the people of Israel when they heard God speak with lightnings and thunder from the mount Sinai, *Exod.* xx. and therefore desired Moses that he would speak to them and not God, for they could not endure his speech: but he gave them a memorable answer, that God did this, *Ut terror illius esset in vobis and non peccaretis*: that his fear may be in you, to the end you commit no more sin.

*Certain
declarations of
God’s
Majesty.*

The same majesty was revealed also in some part to Daniel, who saw God, as he writes, placed upon a most glorious throne: *Dan.* vii. ‘His garment was white as snow: and the hair of his head like clean wool: his throne like flames of fire: the wheels of it like a burning fire. A swift stream of fire issued forth from before him: thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him.’ All this and much more

*The view
of God
given to
Daniel.*

is recorded in holy scripture, to admonish us thereby what a wonderful prince of majesty he is, whom a sinner does offend. Which thing, that just and holy man Job considering, and hearing but one word uttered by his friend, which in his conceit did savour of presumption against this God, burst forth into these words: *Job. xxvi.* ‘Whom hast thou desired to teach? was it not him that made life? He stretched out the north over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing? the pillars of heaven tremble and dread at his beck. Lo! these things are said in part of his ways; and seeing we have heard scarce a little drop of his word, who shall be able to behold the thunder of his greatness?’

Imagine now, my loving brother, that thou seest before thy face, this great and mighty king sitting in his chair of majesty with chariots of fire, unspeakable light, and infinite millions of angels about him. Imagine further which is also true, that thou seest all the creatures in the world stand in his presence, and trembling at his majesty, and most carefully attending to do that for which he created them; as the heavens to move about, the sun, moon, and stars, to give light, and influence the earth to bring forth her substance; and every other creature diligently to labour for performance of the duty assigned him. Imagine besides that thou seest all these creatures how big or little soever they be, hang and depend only on the power and virtue of this God; and thereby only stand, move, and consist; and that there passes from God to each creature in the world, yea, to every part that has motion or being in the same, some beam of his virtue: even as from the sun, we see infinite beams pass into the air. Consider, I say, that no one part of any creature in the world, as the fish in the sea, the grass on the ground, the leaves of trees, or man upon the face of the earth can grow, move, or consist, without some little stream of virtue, and power derived to it continually from God. So that thou must imagine God to stand as a most glorious, and resplendent sun, in the middle or centre of all things created, and from him to pass forth innumerable beams and streams of virtue, to all the creatures that are either in heaven, earth, the air, or waters, and to every part and particle of the same; and that all creatures do depend upon these beams of his divine virtue, inso-

*Contem-
plation of
God's
majesty.*

*How all
creatures
depend on
the Cre-
ator.*

much, that if he should stop, or divert any one of them all, it would destroy, and annihilate presently some creature or other.

This, I say, if thou wilt consider touching the majesty of God, and the infinite dread that all creatures have of him, except only a sinner, for the devils also do fear him, as St. James affirms, *James ii.* thou wilt not marvel at the severe judgment appointed for those that offend him. For I am sure, that we have more regard not to offend the poorest friend we have in this life, than a wicked man has not to offend Almighty God; which is an intolerable contempt of so great a majesty, and such a contempt, indeed, as God himself does account to proceed from plain infidelity. For whereas at a certain time he had declared his own great power, by the mouth of Jeremiah, and threatened with many punishments, the Jews for their wickedness; they were nothing moved therewith; whereupon he commands him to return again unto them, and say these words, *Jeremiah v.* ‘Hear, O foolish people, and without understanding: who have eyes and see not: and ears, and hear not. Will you then fear me? Will you not repent at my presence? I have set the sand a bound for the sea, an everlasting ordinance which it shall not pass over, &c. But the heart of this people is become hard of belief, &c. Which is as much as if he had said, that this want of fear in the Jews, proceeded from their defect of faith. For if they had believed him to be indeed so powerful, terrible and full of majesty, as the holy scripture sets him down, they would have conceived more fear of offending him.

*Want of
fear pro-
ceeds from
infidelity.*

SECT. II.—Of the Benefit of Almighty God.

BUT now if we join to this contemplation of majesty, another consideration of his benefits bestowed upon us; our fault will grow to be far greater. For to injure him who has done us good, is a thing most detestible, even in nature itself. And there was never yet so fierce a heart, no not among brute beasts, but that might be won with courtesy and benefits; but much more among rational creatures does beneficence prevail, especially, if it comes from great personages, whose love and friendship declared unto us but in small gifts, does greatly bind the hearts of the receivers to love them again.

*Of the be-
nefits of
almighty
God.*

Consider then, dear Christian, the infinite good turns and benefits which thou hast received at the hands of this Great God, thereby to win thee to his love, and that thou mayest leave off to offend and injure him. And although, no created tongue, either of man or angels, can express one half of these gifts which thou hast received from him, or the value thereof, or the great love and hearty good will, wherewith he bestowed the same upon thee; yet to help thy memory, and to stir up thy affection to be grateful, I will repeat certain general and principal points thereof, whereunto the rest may be easily referred.

The first benefit of creation. First then call to mind, that he has bestowed upon you the benefit of your creation; whereby he made you of nothing to the likeness of himself, and appointed you so noble an end, as to serve him in this life, and to reign with him in the life to come: having furnished you besides for the better attaining thereof with the use, service and subjection of all his other creatures. The greatness of which benefit may partly be conceived, if you do imagine yourself to want but any one part of your body: as a leg, an arm, an eye, or the like; and that one should freely, even out of pure good-will and love, supply your want; and give the same unto you. Or if you wanted but any one of your senses, as, that you were deaf, blind, or dumb; and some man should restore your sight, hearing, or speech unto you, how would you esteem this benefit? how much would you profess yourself beholden to him for the same? and if the gift of one of these parts only, would seem unto you so singular a benefit; how greatly ought you to esteem the free gift of so many parts together.

Add now hereunto, as I have said, that he has created you to the likeness of himself; to no other end, but to be his honorable servant in this world, and his co-partner in kingly glory, for all eternity to come; and this he has done to you, being only a piece of earth and clay before: now imagine then, from what sea of love all this proceeded.

All creatures made for man. But yet add further, how he has created all this magnificent world for you, and all the creatures thereof to serve you in your business; the heavens to govern you, and to give you light; the earth, air, and water, to minister infinite variety of creatures for your convenience and sustenance; and of all these has made you lord, and master, to use them for your advantage and

benefit in his service, and many also for your consolation and diversion. Which gifts being so manifold and magnificent as they are, I appeal to your own conscience how intolerable an ingratitude it is; so greatly to dishonour and injure the giver, as to apply these gifts to his offence, which he bestowed upon you for his service.

Next after this benefit of creation, ensues the benefit of your redemption, much more excellent, and bountiful than the former; the effect whereof is, that whereas you had lost all those former gifts and benefits, and had moreover made your-

The second benefit of redemption.

self guilty by sin, of eternal punishment and damnation (whereunto the angels were delivered for the sin they committed.) God chose to redeem you, and not the angels; and to satisfy for your enormous fault, vouchsafed to deliver his own only Son to the most abhorrible death of the

cross, to pay the ransom and punishment for you with his blood. O Lord God! what heart can possibly conceive the greatness of this benefit? suppose with thyself, gentle Christian, for the better understanding of this benefit, that thou being a poor and abject peasant under the dominion

A supposition for expressing the greatness of this benefit.

of some great and mighty emperor, hadst with some of his principal peers and chief nobility, committed grievous crimes against his imperial majesty, thou oftentimes, and they but once; and being both by law convicted, and ready to suffer justice for the same, should the emperor's favour so singularly extend itself in thy behalf, that delivering over those other great princes to execution for their demerits, he conceived a desire to save, and pardon thee; and finding no other convenient means in respect of his justice, how to do the same, should lay the pains, shame, and torments of death due unto thy trespasses, upon his only son and heir of all his empire. Tell me now, if being so abject and contemptible a creature, thou shouldst receive so great a grace of a mighty emperor, who had for fewer offences, even in thy sight, put to death great and glorious princes, as God did those principal angels, how wonderful wouldst thou think thyself bound and beholden to him for the same? but further, if this son and heir of this noble monarch, refusing to speak one word for those great princes, should not only accept willingly this dishonour and punishment laid upon him by his father for thy sake; but

also should offer himself thereunto, and crave most incessantly that he might by his death make satisfaction for thy offences, and not only this, but should also derive unto thee the participation of his inheritance, making thee of a bond-slave, *heir-apparent*, to so puissant an emperor, and *co-heir to himself*: could thy heart possibly conceive so great a benefit? were it possible that thy powers of body and soul should not dissolve in the thought of so unspeakable a grace? would not thy bowels in a manner burst asunder with the vehemency of love towards such a benefactor? or can any man of reason ever imagine, that thou wouldst willingly for a thousand worlds offend any more so gracious a Lord? And yet is this benefit of thy redemption dear brother, by infinite degrees surpassing both this and all other temporal graces that man's wit can imagine, in all and every other circumstance that before has been mentioned; and yet it is forgotten, yet it is scarce thought on by many, yet it is little esteemed, and the giver offended daily by sin, as if this had never passed. O singular ingratitude!

In the third place, do come to be considered two other benefits, namely, vocation and justification. The first whereof, is that whereby God of his infinite depth of mercies, has called us from infidelity to the state of Christians, and thereby made us partakers of this our redemption last mentioned, which infidels are not. For although he paid the ransom for all in general, yet he has not imparted the benefit thereof to all, but to such only as it pleased his divine goodness to bestow it upon. After which grace of vocation, and our acceptance thereof, ensue immediately our justification whereby we were not only set free from all our sins, committed before, and from all pain and punishment due to the same; but also our souls were beautified and enriched by the infusion of his holy grace inherent, accompanied with the theological virtues, *Faith, Hope*, and *Charity*, and with the most precious gifts of the Holy Ghost; and by this grace, we were made just and righteous in the sight of God, and entitled to the most blessed inheritance of the kingdom of Heaven; the worthiness of which gift, no tongue of man or angels can express; the same exceeding yet the former two gifts, if I respect my own good, because it would have little availed me to have been

*The third
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benefit of
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and justifi-
cation.*

created and redeemed if I had not been elected and justified by God's free mercy, and grace, without any precedent merit of mine: whereby is seen that these two benefits are the perfection and completement of the other.

After these do follow a great number of benefits together, appertaining properly to such as are made the children, and true friends of God; every one whereof in itself is of most infinite price and value. Among which are in the first place to be numbered the holy Sacraments of Christ's Church, left unto us for our comfort and preservation after we are entered into the bosom thereof. They being nothing else indeed but certain sacred conduits to convey to us the holy grace of God: especially those two which, after our entrance by baptism, do appertain to all men in general, and may be iterated as often as need shall require, or our devotion serve us; I mean, the holy sacraments of *penance* and of the *blessed body and blood* of our Saviour: whereof the first is to *purge* our soul from sin as often as she falls; the second, to feed and comfort the same after she is purged. The first is as a bath made of Christ's precious blood, to wash and cleanse our wounds therein: the second, as a most comfortable and rich garment, to cover our soul after she is washed. In the first, Christ, has left with his spouse the Church, all his authority which he has in heaven or earth, to remit sins: in the second, he has left himself, and his own flesh and blood to be a precious food, wherewith to feed and cherish our souls after our sins are remitted. Which two sovereign sacraments to say nothing of the rest, are such singular benefits and heavenly treasures, that no man, but he that has a spiritual understanding, can conceive; and consequently such as do not esteem the riches of these gifts, or for temporal respects to deprive their souls of the unspeakable benefit thereof, are deeply to be pitied, their losses being everlasting and irrevocable. But let us go forward.

Besides these, there yet remains another benefit, which we call the benefit of preservation; whereby God has kept and preserved us from infinite dangers, whereunto many others before us have fallen, and into which ourselves had fallen in like manner, if God's holy hand had not staid us,

The fifth benefit.

Of the sacraments.

The use of sacraments.

The sixth benefit of preservation and inspiration.

and this not only from ordinary snares of eternal damnation; as adultery, theft, fornication, murder, and other such sins; but from others far more grievous, and dangerous, of schism and heresy, which cut off the very foundation of life everlasting, which is true faith. If then we find ourselves to have been preserved above others by God's special protection, from these and other like dangers: or if after having fallen into them we find ourselves to have been spared and preserved so long from death, and judgment of the same, whereinto so many thousands of others, who sinned perhaps, less than we, have fallen, and are now in endless, and remediless torments: this may make us see and feel in a certain sort this benefit of preservation. Whereunto may be annexed also the most singular benefit of godly inspirations and admonitions, whereby God has often both knocked inwardly at the door of our conscience, and warned us outwardly, by the dangers of other men; by good books, sermons, exhortations, good company, good example of others, and a thousand most merciful means besides, which at divers times he has used and does use, whereby to gain us and our souls to his eternal kingdom, stirring us up to abandon a vicious life, and betake ourselves to his holy and sweet service.

Circum- All which most rare and excellent benefits, being measured either according to their inestimable value in themselves, or according to the love of the heart from which they proceed; or else if we respect the majesty of the giver, or meanness of the receiver; ought in reason to move us most vehemently to gratitude towards so bountiful a benefactor. And this gratitude should make us resolve to serve him unfeignedly, and to prefer his favour before all worldly or mortal respects whatsoever. Or if we cannot obtain so much of ourselves, yet, at least, it should make us resolve not to offend him any more by our sins and wickedness, as we daily do.

There is not so fierce or cruel a nature in the world, as I have noted before, but is mollified, allured, and won by benefits. And histories do relate strange examples in this kind, even among brute beasts*; as of the gratitude of lions, dogs, and the like, towards their masters and benefactors.

*.Eliau in hist. animal.

An obstinate sinner is the only one amongst all the savage creatures that are, whom neither benefits can move, nor courtesies mollify, nor promises allure, nor gifts gain to the faithful service of God, his Lord and Master.

The greatest sinner that is in the world, if he gives his servant twenty rubles a year, or his tenant some little farm to live upon ; if they should not serve him at a beck, cries out against their ingratitude. But if they should further maliciously seek to offend him, and to join with his professed enemy ; how intolerable a matter would this seem in his conceit ? and yet himself, dealing much more ungratefully and injuriously with Almighty God, esteems it a matter of small consideration, and easily pardonable. He deals, I say, far more ungratefully with God : for that he has received a thousand fold for one, in respect of all the benefits that one mortal man can give unto another. Seeing, that he has received all in all of God : the bread which he eats, the ground he treads on, the light he beholds, the air he enjoys, and finally, whatsoever he possesses, either within or without his body ; as also the mind and soul, with all her spiritual endowments ; whereof each one is more worth, than ten thousand bodies ; if men knew, or would consider what a soul is.

The intolerable in gratitude of a sinner towards God.

Of this extreme ingratitude and injury offered by mortal men, God himself is forced to complain in divers places of holy scripture as where he says : *Psalms xxxiv.* ‘ They repaid me evil for good.’ And yet much more vehemently in another place, he calls the heavens to witness this iniquity, crying out : *Jer. ii.* *Obstupescite cæli super hoc.* Be astonished, O ye heavens at this. As if he should say by a figurative kind of speech, lose your senses and go out of your wits, you heavens, with marble at this incredible iniquity of man towards me, for so he expounded the whole matter more at large in another place : *Isaiah i.* *Audite, cæli and auribus percipe, terra, &c.* ‘ Hear O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised me.’ What a lamentable complaint is this of Almighty God, against most vile and base worms of the earth ? but yet, he amplifies this iniquity more vehemently by certain examples and comparisons. *Isa. i.* ‘ The ox (says he) knoweth his own

God's complaint of sinners.

‘er, and the ass his master’s crib: But Israel hath not known me—Wo to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a wicked seed, ungracious children.’ What complaint can be more vehement than this? what complaint can be more dreadful than this wo, coming from the mouth of him who may punish us at his pleasure.

The conclusion. Wherefore dear brother, if thou hast grace cease to be ungrateful to God any longer: cease to offend him who has so many ways prevented thee with benefits; cease to render evil for good, hatred for love, contempt for his fatherly affection towards thee. He has done for thee all he can; he has given thee all that thou art; yea, and in a certain manner, all that he is worth himself; and means besides to make thee partaker of all his glory in the world to come, and requires no more from thee for all this, than love and gratitude. O my loving brother, why wilt thou not grant to him this his desire? why wilt thou not do as much to him, as thou wouldst have another man do to thee, for less than the ten thousandth part of these benefits which thou hast received? for, I dare boldly say, if thou hast given but an alms to a poor man at thy door, thou wouldst think him bound to love thee for it, although, besides this, there were nothing in thee that greatly might deserve his love. But thy Lord and Master, besides all his gifts bestowed upon thee, has infinite causes to draw thy love unto him; that is to say, all the causes, which anything in the world has in it, to purchase love, and infinitely more besides. For, if all the perfections of things created both in heaven and in the earth that may procure love,

were joined together in one, as all their beauty, all their virtue, all their wisdom, all their sweetness, all their nobility, all their goodness and other like excellencies: yet thy Lord and Saviour, whom thou by sinning against him, dost condemn, surpasses all these, by infinite and infinite degrees. For he is not only all these things together, but moreover he is beauty itself, virtue itself, wisdom itself, sweetness itself, nobility itself, goodness itself, and the very fountain and spring, from which, by little parcels, all these things are derived unto his creatures as before has been showed

Be ashamed, then, Christian, of this, thy ingratitude, to so great, so good, and so bountiful a Lord; and resolve for the time to come, to amend thy course of life and former

behaviour towards him. Say at length with the prophet, having considered thy own ingratitude : *Psalm xxiv.* 'For thy namesake, O Lord, thou wilt pardon my sin for it is great.' I know there is nothing which does so much displease thee, or dry up the fountain of thy mercy, or so binds thy hands from doing good, as does ingratitude in the receivers of thy benefits, wherein hitherto I have exceeded all others. But I have done it, O Lord, in my ignorance, not considering thy infinite gifts bestowed upon me, or what account thou wouldst demand again of the same. But now seeing thou hast vouchsafed to make me worthy of this special grace also, whereby to see, and know my own error and fault, I hope hereafter, by direction of the same grace to show myself a better child towards thee. O my God, I am vanquished at length considering the greatness of thy love : and how can I have the heart to offend thee hereafter, seeing thou hast prevented me so many ways with benefits, even when I demanded not the same ? can I have hands evermore to sin against thee, who hast given up thy own hands to be nailed on the cross for me ? no, no, it is too great an injury against thee, O Lord, and wo to me that have done it so often heretofore. But by thy holy assistance, I hope not to return to such iniquity for the time to come : which I beseech thee for thy mercies sake, to grant me from thy holy throne of heaven, Amen.

CHAPTER X.

Of what opinion we shall be concerning the matters aforesaid, at the time of our death.

SECT. 1.—Of those things which make death terrible.

THE holy scriptures teach us, and experience makes it plain, that during the time of this life, the advantages, preferences, and pleasures of the world, possess so strongly the hearts of many men, and hold them chained with such forcible enchantments, being forsaken also sometimes upon their just deserts, by the grace of God, that say, and threaten all a man can, and bring against them the whole scripture from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse, it being all against sin and sinners, yet it will prevail nothing

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ness of
some
hearts.*

with them, being in that lamentable case, that either they believe not, or mind not whatsoever is said to that purpose, against their settled course, and resolution to the contrary. Of this we have infinite examples in scripture: as of Sodom and Gomorrah, *Gen.* xix. with the cities thereabout, which would not hear the warnings that Lot gave them; of Pharaoh and his court, *Exod.* vi. vii. viii. ix. whom all that Moses could do, either by signs or sayings, did not move. And of Judas *Matt.* xxvi. who by no sweet means or sharp threatenings, used by his master, could be brought to change his wicked resolution. But especially the holy prophets sent by God from time to time, to dissuade the people from their wicked life, and consequently deliver them from the plagues that hung over them, give abundant testimony of this matter, complaining everywhere of the hardness of sinners hearts, that would not be moved with all the exhortations, preachings, promises, allurements, exclamations, threatenings and thunderings, they could use. The prophet Zachary shall testify all for all in this behalf, who says of the people of Israel a little before their destruction; *Zach.* vii. 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, saying: 'judge ye true judgments, &c.' whereunto presently he adds, 'But they would not hearken, and they turned away the shoulder to depart: and they stopped their ears, not to hear. And they made their hearts as the adamant stone, lest they should hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts sent in his spirit, by the hands of the prophets: so a great indignation came from the Lord of hosts.'

This then is, and always has been, the way of dissolute worldlings and reprobate people, to harden their hearts like adamant, against anything that can be told them for the amendment of their lives, and for the saving of their souls. Whilst they are in health and prosperity, they will not know God, as in another place himself complains. But yet, as the prophet says, *Psalms* ix. 'The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgments,' which is at the day of their death, being indeed the next door to their judgment, according as St. Paul testifies, saying, *Heb.* ix. 'It is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment.'

This is the day of God, most terrible, sorrowful; and full of tribulation to the wicked; wherein God will be known to be a righteous God, and to restore to every man, 2 *Cor*

v. 'According as he hath done whether it be good or evil.' Or as the prophet describes it, he will be known then to be a terrible God, and such a one as *Psalm lxxv.* 'Taketh away the spirit of princes ; a terrible God to the kings of 'the earth.' At this day as there will be a great change in all other things, mirth being turned into sorrow, laughing into weeping, pleasures into pain stoutness into fear, pride into despair, and the like: so especially, will there be a strange alteration in the judgment and opinion of men. For the wisdom of God (whereof I have spoken in the former chapters, and which, as the scripture says, *1 Cor. ii.* is accounted folly by the wise of the world) will then appear in her likeness, and as it is in very deed, will be confessed by her greatest enemies, to be the only true wisdom ; and all carnal wisdom of worldlings to be mere folly as God calls it.

The great change of things at the day of death.

This the holy scripture sets down clearly, when it describes the speeches and lamentations of the wise men of this world at the last day, concerning the state of holy men whom they despised in this life. *Sap. v.* 'We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined out unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and we have walked through hard ways ; but the way of the Lord we have not known.' Hitherto are the words of holy scripture ; whereby we may perceive—*The lamentation of wicked men in the end.* what a change and alteration of judgment there will be at the last day, from that which men have now ; what confession of folly ? what acknowledgment of error ? what hearty sorrow for labor lost ? what fruitless repentance for having run astray ? O that men would ponder and consider attentively these things now ! We have wearied ourselves, say these miserable men, in the ways of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways.' What a description is this of lamentable worldlings to break their brains daily, and weary out themselves in the pursuit of the vanities of this world, for which notwithstanding they suffer, oftentimes, more pains, than do the justice of purchasing heaven ? and when they arrive

at the last day at the gate of death, wearied and worn out with trouble add toil, they find that all their labor is lost, and all their vexation taken in vain. For the little wealth which they have scraped together in this world, and for which they have struggled and drudged so much, will avail them nothing at that instant, but rather increase exceedingly the burden of their afflictions ; which will be manifold, and so grievous, and intolerable in the wicked, that no created mind can perfectly conceive it, but he that feels them ; although some small conjecture may be made thereof by these three general ensuing points, whereunto the rest may be referred.

The first point. Of misery in death. The first is the excessive pain which commonly men suffer in the separation of their souls and bodies ; which having lived so long together, united, as two dear friends, in joy and pleasure, are now most loath to part, were it not that they are violently forced thereunto. This pain may partly be conceived, if we would go about to drive out life or soul (which soul is all over, and every where throughout our body) but from the least part or member thereof ; as surgeons are wont to do, when they will mortify any one place, to make it break ; what intolerable pain does a man suffer before this member is dead ? what raging grief does he

How painful is mortifying of our flesh. abide ? if then the mortifying of one little part only, does so much afflict us ; imagine what the violent mortifying of all the parts together will do : for we see that first the soul is driven, by death, to leave the extremities, as the toes, feet, and fingers, then legs and arms ; and so consequently, one part dies after another, till life is restrained only to the heart, which holds out longest, as the principal part ; but yet finally, must be also constrained to render itself, though with never so much pains and resistance. Which pain, how great and strong it is, may appear by the breaking in pieces the very strings and holds wherewith it is environed, through the excessive vehemency of this deadly torment.

A similitude expressing the pain of death. Nevertheless, before it comes to this point of yielding, no man can express the cruel conflict that is betwixt death and the soul, and what distresses she suffers in the time of her agony. Imagine, that a prince possessed a goodly city, in all peace wealth and pleasure, and in great friendship with

all his neighbors round about him, who promised to assist him in all his affairs and exigencies : and that upon a sudden, his mortal enemy should come and besiege this city, and taking one hold after another, one wall after another, one castle after another, should drive this prince into a little tower, and besiege him therein, all his other holds being beaten down, and his men slain in his fight ; what fear, anguish, and misery would this afflicted prince be in ? how often would he look out at the windows and loop holes of this tower, to see whether his friends and neighbors would come to help him or no ? and if he saw them all abandon him, and his cruel enemy even ready to break in upon him, would he not, think you, be in a most piteous plight ? Even so fares it with our poor soul at the hour of death : the body wherein she reigned like a princess in all pleasures, whilst it flourished, is now battered and overthrown by her enemy, which is death : the arms, legs, and other parts wherewith she was fortified, as with walls, during time of health, are now surprized, and beaten to the ground, and she is driven to the heart, as to the last refuge, wherein also she is most fiercely assailed in such sort that she cannot possibly hold out long. Her dearest friends soothed her in time of prosperity, and promised assistance ; youth, agility, strength, courage diet, physic, and other human helps, do now utterly abandon her : the enemy will not be pacified or make any league at all ; but night and day assaults this turret wherein she is retired, and which now begins to shake and shiver in pieces. So that she expects hourly when her enemy, in a most raging and dreadful manner, will break in upon her.

What think you now, is the state of this afflicted soul ? it is no marvel if a wise man become a fool, or a stout worldly man, most timorous in this instant of extremity, as we often see they do, so that they can dispose well of nothing at this hour, either towards God or towards the world. The cause whereof is the extremity of pains, that oppress their minds, as St. Austin well notes, *An admonition of* giving us therewithal a most excellent forewarn- *St. Austin* ing of this day, if men were so happy as to follow it.*
 ‘ When you shall be in your last sickness, dear brethren,

* Serm. 48. ad Frat in Emo. circa finem.

‘ says he, O how hard and painful a thing will it be for you
 ‘ to repent of your faults committed, and of good deeds
 ‘ omitted? and why is this, but because all the intention
 ‘ of your mind will run thither, where all the force of
 ‘ the pain is: many impediments will hinder men at that
 ‘ day; the pain of the body, the fear of death, the sight of
 ‘ children, for whom their fathers will think themselves
 ‘ damned; the weeping of the wife, the flattery of the
 ‘ world, the temptations of the devil, the dissimulation of
 ‘ physicians for lucre sake, and the like. And believe
 ‘ thou, O man, who readest this, that thou shalt quickly
 ‘ prove all this true upon thyself; and therefore I beseech
 ‘ thee, that thou wilt do penance before thou comest to this
 ‘ last day. Dispose of thy house, and make thy testament
 ‘ whilst thou art whole, whilst thou art wise, whilst thou
 ‘ art thine own man: for if thou tarriest till the last day,
 ‘ thou shalt be led whither thou wouldst not.’ Hitherto
 are St. Austin’s words.

The second point
Of misery in death. The second thing which will make death most terrible, and grievous to a worldly man, is the sudden parting, and that forever and ever, from all the things which he loved most dearly in this life; as from his riches, possessions, honours, offices, fair buildings, goodly apparel, and rich jewels: as also from wife and children, kindred and friends, and all other earthly delights and commodities, wherewith in this life he thought himself a most happy man. And now to be plucked from these upon the sudden, without hope ever to see or use them again; and that oftentimes, when he least doubted of any such matter, must needs be a point of extreme great grief, especially if he be in the state which holy Job describes, when he says, *Job* xxi. 23. ‘ One man dieth strong and heal, rich and happy.’ What a griping grief, how intolerable a torment will this be? O how true an oracle is that of God, who says: *Eccl.* xlii. O death! how bitter is ‘ the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions:’ but alas! if the very memory of death is so bitter, how much more death itself, when it will surprize a man having peace in his possessions, and it will be said unto him, as Christ reports it was said, to that wealthy man in the gospel, who had his barns full, and was now come to the highest top of felicity: *Luke* xii. ‘Thou

‘ fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee ; and
 ‘ whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided ? ’

O dear Christian ! it is impossible for any mortal tongue to express the doleful state of a worldly man in this instant of death, when nothing of all that he has gathered together with so much labour and toil, and wherein he was wont to repose so great confidence, will avail him any longer, but rather afflict his soul with the memory thereof, considering that now he must leave all to others, and go himself to give an account for the gathering and using of the same, and that perhaps to his eternal damnation ; whilst in the mean time others live merrily and pleasantly upon what he has got : little remembering and less caring for him, that perhaps lies burning in the unquenchable fire for those riches unjustly heaped up and left to them. This undoubtedly is a most woful and lamentable point, which will bring many a man to great sorrow and anguish of heart at the last day ; when all earthly joys must be left, all pleasures and commoditics for ever abandoned. O what a doleful day of parting will this be ? what wilt thou say, my friend, at this day, when all thy glory, all thy wealth, all thy pomp, is come to an end ? what art thou the better now for having lived in credit with the world, in favour of princes, exalted by all men, feared, revered, and honoured by all sorts ; seeing at this instant, all thy jollity, pride, and pomp is at an end, all thy former felicity is arrived now to her everlasting period.

But now besides all this, there is a third thing which more than all the rest will make this day of death to be most dreadful and miserable unto a worldly man ; to wit, the consideration of what will become of both his body and soul.

And for his body, it will be no small horror to think on that saying of holy scripture : *Eccli. x.* ‘ When a man shall die, he shall inherit serpents, and beasts and worms.’ That is, he must be thrown out to be the food of vermin. That body, I mean, which was before so delicately entertained with all variety of meats, soft pillows, and beds of down, so finely set forth in apparel and other ornaments, whereupon the wind might not be suffered to blow, nor the sun to shine ;

*The sorrow
of leav-
ing all.*

*The third
point. Of
misery in
death.*

*The mis-
erable
change of
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that body, I say, in whose beauty there was so much pride taken, and whereby so many sins were daily committed, that body, which in this world was accustomed to all pampering and niceness, and would abide no austerity or discipline at all, must now be forlorn and abandoned by all men, and left only for a prey to be devoured by worms. Now the time is come when those words of God must be fulfilled, which he uttered by his prophet against delicate people: *Isaiah* iii. 'In that day the Lord will take away ' the ornaments, &c. and instead of a sweet smell there ' shall be stench, and instead of a girdle a cord, and instead ' of curled hair baldness, &c.' All which bodily disgrace and misery, although it cannot but breed much sorrow in

the heart of him that lies dying, yet is nothing in respect of the dreadful thoughts which he will have touching his soul; to wit, what will become thereof, whither it will go, after its departure out of the body. And then considering that it must

*Thoughts
of him that
lies dying.*

appear before the judgment seat of Almighty God, and there receive sentence, either of unspeakable glory, or unsupportable pains; he falls to consider more in particular the danger thereof, by comparing God's justice and threats set down in holy writ against sinners, with his own life; he begins to examine the witness, which is his conscience, and finds the same ready to lay infinite accusations against him, when he comes to the place of justice.

And now, dear Christian, begins the inexplicable misery of this poor afflicted man; now does the multitude of his sins present themselves before his face, now does he indeed see verified that sentence of sacred scripture: *Eccli.* xi.

29. *In fine hominis denudatio operum*: the end of a man is the disclosing of his works. Now all God's

*A pitiful
plight of
a dying
man.*

threats against wicked livers muster before his eyes; neither is there any one severe saying of holy writ pronounced against sinners, which now does not offer itself to his mind. Our ghostly ene-

my, who in this life laboured to keep all these things from our consideration, thereby the more easily to entertain us in sin and pleasure, will now lay all, and more before our face, amplifying and urging every point to the uttermost, alledging our conscience to every thing for his witness. Which when the poor dying soul cannot deny, she must

needs be thereby most vehemently terrified. And so we see it daily come to pass, even in many virtuous and holy men: wherefore St. Hierom reports* a very memorable example of blessed St. Hilarian, whose soul being greatly affrighted with these considerations, and exceeding loath to part from his body, at length after a long conflict took heart and said, ‘Go forth my soul, go forth; why art thou so ‘sore afraid? thou hast served Christ almost threescore ‘and ten years, and art thou now so fearful to depart.’ To like effect also the holy martyr of God, St. Cyprian,† tells of a virtuous and godly bishop, who dying in his time, was greatly terrified at the hour of death, notwithstanding he had lived very virtuously; till at length Christ appearing unto him in the form of a godly young man, rebuked him in these words: ‘You are afraid to suffer, and out of this ‘life you will not go; what then shall I do to you?’ which words and examples, St. Augustine did often use to recount, talking of this matter, as his scholar Possidius records‡ in his life.

Now then, if good men and saints are so afraid at this passage, yea such as had served God with all purity of life and perfect zeal, for the space of threescore and ten years together; what will they do who scarce have served him truly one day in all their lives, but rather have spent their years in sin and the vanities of this world? will not these men, think you, be in great extremity at this passage! surely St. Augustine describes the same very affectingly in one of his sermons, and according to his custom, gives a notable exhortation upon the same§ ‘If you well know, ‘dearly beloved, says he, with how great fear and pain the ‘soul of man does pass from the body; mark diligently ‘what I shall say to you; the angels at that hour will ‘come to take thy soul and bring her before the judgment ‘seat of a most dreadful judge; and then she, calling to ‘mind her wicked deeds, will begin exceedingly to fear and ‘tremble, and would gladly fly and leave her deeds behind ‘her, seeking to entreat the angels, and to request but one ‘hour’s space or delay. But that will not be granted, and ‘her evil works, crying out together, will speak against

* Cyp. lb. de Mortal. † Possidius in vita Aug. ‡ Cap 1. de vanitate sæculi.—§ Hierom. in vita Hila. Abbatis.

‘ her, and say: We will not stay behind, nor part from thee, thou hast done us, and we are thy works, and therefore we will follow thee whithersoever thou goest yea even to the seat of judgment. This lo! is the state of a sinner’s soul, which parting from his body with horrible fear, goes onward to judgment loaden with sins, and with infinite confusion. Contrary-wise the just man’s soul goes out of his body with great joy and comfort, and the good Angels accompany with exultation. Wherefore brethren, seeing these things are so; fear this terrible hour of death now, to the end you may not fear when you come to it. Foresee it now, that then you may be secure.’ Thus far St. Augustine.

And because this holy father, and learned doctor of Christ’s church, makes mention in this place of good and evil angels, which are ready at the hour of death to receive the souls of such as depart out of this life; it will not be from our purpose to note, that oftentimes God permits the apparitions of angels both good and evil, as also of other saints, to some men lying on their death beds, for a taste either of comfort or sorrow, touching that which will ensue in the world to come. And this is also a singular privilege, among others, belonging to this passage. And concerning the just, I have showed before an example of St. Cyprian and St. Augustine,* touching one to whom Christ appeared at the hour of his death. And St. Gregory the Great, has divers narrations to that purpose in the fourth book of his dialogues. As for example sake, of one Ursinus, to whom the blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul appeared. But as to evil spirits and wicked angels, who showed themselves to divers sinners at the hour of death, and denounced to them their eternal damnation, and horrible torments appointed in hell, we have many and most terrible examples recorded in many grave, and ancient writers. As among others, that recorded by St. Gregory† of one Chiserius a rich man, but as full of sin as of wealth, to whom, lying on his death-bed, the infernal fiends appeared in most ugly shapes, showing how he was now delivered

*Appearing
of Angels
at the hour
of death.*

* Chap. 12 & 14, 15, &c. † Lib. 4. Dial. cap. 38.

into their power, and therefore would never depart from him, till dying he left his soul to be carried by them to eternal torments.

The like example does venerable Bede recount* to have happened in our country about this time. And among others of a certain wicked courtier in great favour with king Coenrede, to whom lying in the pangs of death, and being now a little recovered, both the good and evil angels appeared visibly; the one laying before him a very small book of his good deeds, and the other a great huge volume of his enormous crimes. Which after they had caused him to read; by the permission of the good angels they seized upon him; assigning also to him the certain hour of his departure, according as both himself confessed openly to all that came, to visit him; and as by his horrible and desperate death ensuing at the very hour by them appointed, he manifestly confirmed. He records the like story in the chapter following of one whom he knew himself; and, as both he, St. Gregory, and St. Cyprian also note, all these and the like visions were permitted for our sakes who yet live, and may profit by the same; and not for their good that died, whom they nothing at all availed.

Which being so, dear Christian, that is, this passage of death being so terrible, so dangerous, and yet so inevitable as it is: seeing so many men do perish, and are overwhelmed daily in passing over this perilous gulf, as both holy scriptures and ancient fathers testify unto us, by examples and records: what man of discretion would not learn to be wise by other men's dangers? or what reasonable creature would not take heed and look about him, being warned so manifestly and apparently of his own peril? If thou art a Christian, and dost believe indeed the things which Christian faith does teach thee: then dost thou know and most certainly believe also, that, of what state, age, strength, dignity, or condition soever thou art now: yet must thou thyself, who now dost read this point, in health, and mirth, and thinkest the same little appertaining to thee, one of these days, and that perhaps very shortly after the reading here-

The application of all that has been said.

* Lib 5 hist. Angl. c. 15.

of, come to prove all these things in thine own person. That is thou must with sorrow and grief be forced to thy bed : and there, after all struggles with the darts of death, thou must yield thy body which thou lovest now so dearly, to be the bait of worms, and thy soul to the trial of justice, for her deeds in this life.

SECT. II. *Containing the application of the premises.*

A very profitable consideration upon the premises.

AND now it remains, that after all these declarations and discourses, we make some application of the things to ourselves for our own profit, and the direction of our life. Wherefore imagine now, my dear brother, and friend, even thou who art so fresh and healthy at this instant, if the ten, twenty, or two years, or perhaps two months or days which thou hast yet to live, were now to end, and that thou wert even at this present stretched out upon a bed ; wearied and worn out with dolour and pain ; thy worldly friends about thee weeping, and many of them desiring thy goods ; the physicians departed with their fees, as having given thee over : and thou lying there alone mute and dumb, in a most pitiful agony, expecting from moment to moment the last stroke of death to be given thee. Tell me in this instant, what will all the pleasures and commodities of the whole earth avail thee ? what comfort or ease will it be to thee now, to have been a man honoured in this world, to have been reputed by the people ; to have gathered wealth, to have borne office, and enjoyed the princes favour, to have left thy children and kindred in abundance ; to have trodden down thy enemies ; and to have stirred much, and borne great sway in this life ? what pleasure, I say, or benefit would it be to thee, to have been beautiful, to have been gallant in apparel, goodly in personage, glittering in gold ; would not all these things rather afflict than avail thee at this instant.

The thought and speech of the soul at our dying day.

No doubt, but now thou wilt see and thoroughly perceive the vanity of these trifles : thou wilt prove true the saying of the wise man : *Prov. xi.* ‘ Riches shalt not profit in the day of re-venge.’ That most excellent demand of holy Job, will oftentimes offer itself unto thy remembrances : *Job. xxi. 21. Quid ad eum pertinet de domo sua,*

post se? What is it to him what befallerh his house after him? what good or comfort will he take thereby? *Jer.* xv. 'Who shall have pity on thee?' (says God to Jerusalem, by his prophet Jeremiah) 'who shall bemoan thee?' or who shall go to pray for thy peace? thou hast forsaken me, says our Lord, thou art gone backward and I will stretch out my hand and will destroy thee.' And yet further by another prophet he demands of wicked men, *Isa* x. 'What will you do in the day of visitation, and of the calamity which cometh from afar? To whom will ye flee for help? Where will you leave your glory?' And in another place, expressing yet more effectually their state and misery, he says, *Jer.* xi. 'They shall cry to the Gods to whom they offer sacrifice, and they shall not save them in the time of their affliction.' That is, they shall cry and call upon their friends, acquaintance, wealth, honour, and other idols, which they served more than God in this life, but they shall receive no help or comfort from them.

O dear Christian, what difference of thought, what change of judgment, what discovery of vanities, will this day bring? thy heart within thee will now begin to reason; lo, here is now an end of my delights and worldly prosperities. All my joys, all my pleasures, all my mirth, all my pastimes, are now past. Where are my friends, that were wont to laugh with me; my servants wont to attend me; my children wont to sport the time with me? where are all my coaches and horses. wherewith I was wont to make so great a show? the bows of people accustomed to honour me, the crowd following me? where all my dalliances and tricks of love; all my pleasant music; all my sumptuous buildings; all my costly feasts and banquets? and above all, where are now my dear and sweet friends, who it seemed would never have forsaken me? but alas, all are now gone, and have left me here alone to answer the reckoning for all; and none of them will do so much as to go with me to judgment, or to speak one word in my behalf. Wo to me that I did not foresee this day sooner and so make better provision for it. It is now too late, and I fear I have purchased eternal damnation, for a little pleasure, and have lost unspeakable glory, for a fleeting vanity. O how happy and twice fortunate are they, who lived so, that they need not be afraid of this day; I now see the difference betwixt the

A lamentable complaint.

ends of good and evil men, and marvel not that the scriptures say of the one, *Psalm*. cxv. ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints: *Psalm*. xxxiii. ‘The death of the wicked is very evil.’ O that I had lived as virtuously as some others have done: or as I had often inspirations from God to do, how sweet and comfortable would that be to me now in this my last and extreme distress.

To these thoughts and rueful speeches, my loving brother, shall your soul be driven at the last hour of your departure, if now you prevent it not by wisdom, and diligence. For which prevention, the spirit of God has revealed to us two principal means: the first whereof is the diligent exercise of good works in this life, to which Christ himself assures a good and happy passage at our death. For so he pronounced plainly by a voice from heaven to his dear apostle St. John: *Apoc*. xiv. ‘They may rest from their labors: for their works follow them.’ And holy David the prophet expresses the manner of a good man’s departure more in particular, saying, *Psalm* xl. ‘The Lord (will) ‘help him on his bed of sorrow;’ that is, upon his death-bed, or bed of his last departure, which to a worldly man, may rightly be called the bed of sorrow, seeing it is nothing else but a collection and heap of all sorrows together. Which sorrows in a Christian can no way be better prevented than by doing good works in this life, which at his death he may be sure will not fail him. For so St. Paul assures us when he says, *Heb*. vi. ‘God is not unjust, ‘that he should forget your work and the love which you ‘have shown in his name, you who have ministered, and ‘do minister to the saints. And we desire that every one ‘of you should show forth the same carefulness (of ministering to saints for supplying their necessities) to the accomplishing of hope unto the ‘end.) So says St. Paul: which is as much as to say, that at our ending day you may be full of hope, in respect of the alms and other good works which you have done to the servants of God, for his sake, in your life-time, which his divine majesty holds himself as much bound fully to reward at your last day, as if he might be accounted unjust, if he did it not. What more excellent assurance can be given than this?

Two means to prevent the terror of death.

An excellent assurance given by St. Paul for reward of good works.

what more comfortable exhortation, and persuasion to do good works in a man's health, than this of the apostle, to obtain thereby *the fulness of hope*, in the hour of our death? that is to say, that our soul in that dreadful passage will be void of fear, and replenished with all kind of hope, confidence, and comfort from God himself.

Therefore the first and chief preparation to find comfort at our death, is to be full of good works in our life, especially alms deeds, and works of charity, whereof there would be no end, if we would begin to treat and declare what both holy scripture and the spirit of God, and his saints and servants, have uttered in commendation thereof. The general sentence of Christ our Saviour is most admirable, being as it is universal, when having spoken of the most grievous sins in the scribes and pharisees, to wit, of rapine and iniquity, from which he exhorted them to cleanse their minds: yet he adds presently this other general remedy: *Luke xi.* 'But yet that which remaineth, give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you.' Of what a wonderful force is this, that it could cleanse even the scribes and pharisees of rapine and iniquity, yea, and of all other offences! But yet the spirit of God in the prophet Daniel went somewhat further, for he offered not only to scribes and pharisees that believed in God to be cleansed this way; but even the king Nabuchodonozor himself, that was a mere Pagan and Gentile, exhorting him to redeem his sins with alms. *Dan. iv.* 'Wherefore, O king, (says he) let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and redeem thou thy sins with blessed alm's deeds, and thy iniquities with works of mercy towards the poor, perhaps he will pardon thy sins by this means.'

*The force
and vir-
tue of
alms-
deeds.*

This was the prophets counsel, and it was good counsel; for by this means God had mercy upon him indeed, before his death. And if God respects so much these charitable deeds, even in heathens and unbelieving people, (according to what we read also in the acts of the apostles, *Acts x.* that the alm-deeds of Cornelius a Centurion, were accepted by Almighty God, and rewarded by sending St. Peter to him, to convert him to the Christian faith) how much more will God accept and reward the same in Christians, especially at their death, when they have most need of his heavenly comfort? The spirit of God writes of a

valiant woman, that had a large hand in giving alms: *Prov. xxxi.* She hath opened her hand to the needy, and stretched out her hands to the poor. But what reward ensues? twenty blessings truly, which you may read in the text, and one of the greatest is: ‘And she shall laugh in the latter day,’ that is to say, when others will weep and be afflicted at the death, then shall she rejoice and be in mirth.

Holy St. Chrysostom was wont to make many earnest speeches about this matter to his people of Constantinople, in his ordinary sermons; and amongst other things he was wont to say: that a great alms-giver could not possibly be damned, nor have an evil death. The reason is, because he had so many lords and great courtiers of heaven to pray and be intercessors for him, which are the poor by Christ’s own interpretation, when he says, *Matt. v.* ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. That it is impossible for God not to hear them, when they join

together to obtain pardon for any man; as they always do for a great alms-giver. To which effect there is a story in the book called *Pratum Spirituale*,* of a certain woman that cried vengeance at God’s hands, many days together against Zeno the emperor, for taking away her daughter; which Zeno being a man that gave great and large alms, it was answered to the woman in a vision, that those his many alms-deeds did defend him against her demand of vengeance.

We read also of a certain captain, who having lived extremely wicked in all kind of looseness and liberty of a soldier’s life, fell sick at last even unto death, and being extremely afraid and vexed for divers days together with the consciousness of so many heinous sins committed all the time of his life, at last falling into a great trance, there came into his mind, and represented itself as it were before his eyes, with infinite comfort, that he had once in the sacking of a certain city, saved a young virgin from ravishing by another soldier in respect of which act (it being the only good thing that he could remember done by him throughout his life) it seemed that Almighty God would have mercy upon him, and

The saying of St. Chrysostom about alms-deeds.

Zeno the emperor defended by alms-deeds.

A comfortable example of the death of a repentant soldier

*See *Pratum spirituale. cap. 275.*

give him true repentance and pardon for his sins ; which thought, as it did comfort him infinitely in that afflicted state of his, so it fell out to be true very soon after ; for feeling by this means an exceeding tenderness of heart towards sorrow for his said sins, he broke forth into many tears, confessed himself according to the use of Christ's Catholic Church, received the sacraments of penance, eucharist, and extreme unction, and so died most happily repentant for his sins, and full of hope, comfort, and consolation from Almighty God for his exceeding mercies towards him.

This then is the force and virtue of this singular patronage of good works, to help and assist us at our death : to which effect St. John Damascen has that excellent *A notable parable of St. John Damascen in vita Mar.* parable of the steward that had three sworn friends to help him at all exigencies ; but when at length he fell into disgrace, and wrathful offence of his king, and was called in haste to appear before him, and give up his accounts ; he being greatly terrified with his sudden change, ran up and down as a man amazed, to seek out his three friends, to go with him, and to be surety for him, if need required ; but when he came to the first, he was answered by him, that the king being a terrible man, he durst not appear before him, only he said, seeing the steward's apparel was not good, he would lend him some better apparel to appear before him with credit. Going therefore to the second friend, he denied in like manner to go with him to the king's presence, or to speak for him, but only because he was somewhat handsomely apparelled, he would accompany him, for honour's sake, unto the palace gate, and there would leave him.

The poor man being thus abandoned by his first two friends, he ran with a sorrowful heart to the third, who hearing the cause, bid him be of good cheer, for he would go with him, and, enter before the king intreat and plead for him, and, if need were, be surety for all his debts ; and so he did, and the afflicted steward was delivered thereby, and restored to the king's favour again. This is the parable, and the first two faint and false friends are the *The explication of the parable.* world, and our carnal kindred, and worldly friends, both forsaking us at our death ; the former lending us only a fair cloth or two to be laid over the bier, wherein we are carried ; and the second ac-

companying us only, for honour's sake, unto the grave, or pit, where we must enter. But the third friend, which are our good works, and alms-deeds, is content to enter with us to the presence of the prince himself, pleads and entreats for us and so pacifies his wrath, that by his earnest and effectual intercession, we are restored to his favour and friendship again. This then is the first prevention and preparation for Christian men to assure to themselves a comfortable dying day.

The second way of preventing the terror of death.

The second means to prevent the same is, that we premeditate, and think often of this passage of death before-hand, if we would not fear the same, and be terrified therewith when it comes. For as philosophers say, *Ab assuetis non fit passio* : things whereunto we are accustomed do not move, or trouble us much : as for example, a horse accustomed to the noise and terror of war, and to hear the beating of drums, and to see the discharging of artillery, starts not thereat, as other horses will do, to whom the matter is strange and new : and so he that acquaints himself before with the ghastly visage of death, by daily mention thereof, is less subject to the fear and terror of the thing itself when it comes ; for he has made all his accounts beforehand, as holy Job had, when he said of himself, *Job* xiv. all the days of my life do I attend the coming of my change, or departure from this world. So he passed every day in the thought of death ; whose example all holy men have commonly followed, and do at this day, and that with great reason, though careless men say, that this meditation will hinder their mirth, breed melancholy and such other things. For if this bitter cup cannot pass, but that all must drink thereof, then it is wisdom and providence to look upon it, and think thereof well before-hand.

An example showing the utility of frequent meditation of death.

If there were a certain river to be passed that no man could avoid, and if each man and woman in their turns must pass the same, and that perforce and in haste when they are called unto it, if most people were known to perish and be drowned in that passage ; were it not wisdom for a man to go and view the place of passage before his turn comes to enter and to be forced to take his chance therein ? were it not good that he should go as near the

river as he could to behold the entrance, examine the ford, see and contemplate the passage of others, as well such as have miscarried, as those that have happily escaped and arrived safely on the other side? were not all this wisdom think you, and most necessary and profitable providence? And how then in this most dangerous passage of death, through which all must pass, and do daily, and many are everlastingly cast away by passing: how I say, are worldly men so foolishly negligent, and delicate, that not to hinder their mirth, they will not so much as think of it, nor trouble their minds with thoughts of any such matter, or take any notice thereof at all, until the very moment that themselves must pass perforce? oh sad deceit! oh lamentable folly and negligence! how many thousands might be saved both body and soul, who perished in this passage, if they would vouchsafe but to view and look upon it beforehand.

*Great
folly of
careless
worldly
men.*

We read of St. Hierom that he was wont to say, that no day passed him, nay, no hour, whether he were eating, drinking, studying, praying, rising, or going to sleep, but he thought of this passage, and therefore in his picture there is commonly a painted crucifix, with a death's head by it, as a double memorial of our dying day; whereto some do add an hour-glass, for to measure the time how it runs towards this passage. And although some careless wanton people in the world will laugh at this diligence (which many servants of God do use also at this day) yet they will find to their cost, how profitable an exercise this was and is. For certainly no one thing under heaven is more forcibly and potent to hold a man in good order, and to repress the fumes and furies of his rebellious passions and disordinate appetites in this life than his often remembering death; because it strikes down the very topsails of vanity at one blow. And if princes in their greatness of fortune, and worldly men amidst their prosperities in their banquetings, feasting, marriages, masques, and the like, would admit but one serious thought of this last passage, and what they will be, and feel therein: it would hold them within such limits of temperate proceedings, that they would, according to our English proverb be both merry and wise together, and feast without offending God.

*The example
of St.
Hierom
with his
death's
head.*

A contemplation about the dead man's skull. And to say a word or two more of the death's head, or dead man's skull, left before with St. Hierom ; true it is, that it seems an ugly and loathsome sight to such as now flourish in flesh, and have not yet their bones discovered and dried up, nor their faces disfigured, as that skull ; has but

to that spiritual wise men it seems a more pleasant sight than the other, and as much more true and necessary spectacle ; for it makes us see much more sincerely what we are, and what we shall be shortly. For which cause many devout people, and some princes also, used to keep the same by them in their chambers, that they may be often admonished thereby to hold continually in their mind and meditations, the thing which it represents, especially by help of these words which commonly are written about the same skull : *Sum quod eris, fueramque quodes.* I am

The speech of a death's head to the beholder. that which thou shalt be, and have been which thou art now. That is to say, I have been as strong and merry, as thou art at this present ; I have been as proud and vain of my stature, beauty, agility, and nimbleness, and other qualities, and ornaments of my body, as thou ever hast been, that now lookest upon me with disdain and contempt. And shortly thou shalt be that which I am now ; that is to say, a dried skull, bones without flesh, mouth without tongue, ear-holes without hearing, eye-pits without sight, brows without brain, and head without sense or feeling. The soul that was wont to quicken me, and give life to all, has long ago abandoned me, and left me to be the food of worms ; and so shall thou be shortly also, notwithstanding all thy care and diligence in dressing, decking and preserving thyself ; neither do thou think that the time will be long, for it flies and fleets with the wind, nor stays for any occasion whatsoever.

Remember then St. Hierom's hour glass that runs continually ; and for more assurance, take thyself by the wrist, and feel the beating of thy own pulse, which is the clock or dial of thy heart, and consider that every blow and stroke thereof, is a stroke to the shortening of thy life, and the ending of thy pulse is the ending of thy days ; for when the pulse stands still and beats no more, thy soul flies, and then thou shalt be as I am now. And this is the speech of the death's head to him that beholds it ; which, imagine, gentle reader, to be thyself, and thereby seek to profit by

other men's example that have come to that state before : which if thou wouldst seriously do, and enter into consideration and contemplation thereof, thou wouldst, no doubt, reap such singular advantage thereby, that the same might serve thee for a light to guide and direct the residue of that little time which thou hast in this world to enjoy, in the true path and course of a virtuous life and conversation.

And this may serve for this place, to show the great and many advantages which the frequent meditation and serious consideration of this our last passage may bring unto men : for that indeed it lays truly before us what a man is, how frail and miserable a creature, how fond and vain in the haughtiness of his projects, while he is in health and prosperity. It is the true glass that represents a man as he is indeed, other glasses are false and counterfeit, and full of fraud in their representations, but this is sincere and simple, and beguiles no man. For which cause holy fathers that labour to make us truly know ourselves, and thereby repress some part of the swelling pride and insolence of our flesh and worldly thoughts, principally persuade us to look often upon this glass ; and above all other meditations, to make this our frequent and ordinary meditation, from which divers and sundry most excellent effects and fruits will ensue, whereof I shall show some few in this place, and therewithal make an end of this chapter, and of this whole matter.

How profitable it is to think upon death.

The first fruit is, that we shall hereby stand in continual awe and expectation of death, as you have heard holy Job affirm of himself before, and king David also confessed, *Psalms liv.* 'That the fear of death was fallen upon him.' Out of which fear, does proceed a second effect of great weight in man's life, to wit, solicitude ; which the blessed man Job had by his continual meditation : for he says of himself. *Job xxxiii.* that by consideration he was made pen-sive with fear, and thereupon he adds further, *Job ix.* 'That he feared all his works.' In which case St. Paul also signifies himself to be, when he exhorts all men *Gal. vi.* to be careful to do good works whilst they have time : and for that this time is but short, *1 Cor. vi.* so to use this present world as though they used it not. The third effect that follows in the meditation of death, is the understanding of our own baseness, and vileness, whereunto St. Paul exhorted the

Corinthians when he said unto them, *2 Cor. xiii* except you be reprobates, you know yourselves. For he that thinks often upon the state of a dead man, will easily confess with St. James, *Jam. iv.* 'That our life is a vapour,' with Isaiah, *Isa. xl.* that all the glory of man is as the flower of the field.' And will finally say to himself, with the wiseman; *Eccli. x.* 'why is earth and ashes proud,' and take so much upon it.

These are the most excellent effects that do ensue, by frequent meditation and consideration of death. But besides these, there follows also a fourth, which is the casting from us all the superfluous worldly cares, which are commonly in them that consider not their end; according as the wise man warns us, when he says, *Eccli. ii.* 'God hath given to the sinner vexation and superfluous care to heap up and to gather together, to give it to him that hath pleased God.' And out of this effect is engendered by little and little, and by degrees another more high and excellent thing called the contempt of creatures, for the love of their Creator, whereunto St. Paul was arrived when he wrote these words: *Phil. iii.* 'I do esteem all things as dung, for the gaining of Christ.' And from this proceeds another (which is the sixth and last) called the contempt, or rather the love and desire of death. Which St. Paul also had attained unto, when he said of himself, *Phil. i.* 'I do desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.' And the holy Prophet David, who says, *Psalms liv.* 'That the fear of death was fallen upon him.' Came at length to cry out, *Psalms xli.* 'My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God,' (who is the living fountain) 'when shall I come and appear before the face of God?' So that from the fear of death, which is the first effect that springs from the remembrance and meditation thereof, he was come now to the love and most earnest desire of the same, which is the highest degree of comfort and the most supreme felicity that saints do arrive at in this life.

The highest felicity of Saints in this life.

The conclusion of all.

Endeavour then, dear Christian brother, by frequent and diligent meditation of this passage, to attain to this felicity, or, at least, to some part or degree thereof. Fear death now that thou mayest not fear it then. For as God by his holy spirit assures us, *Eccli. i.* 'The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and

‘ shall give joy, and gladness, and length of days. With
 ‘ him that feareth the Lord it shall go well in the latter end,
 ‘ and in the day of his death he shall be blessed.’

CHAPTER XI.

Of the great and severe pains and punishments, temporal, for them that will be saved, eternal, for the damned, appointed by God for sinners after this life.

SECT. I.—Of God's punishments in general.

AMONGST all other means which Almighty God uses towards the children of man in this life, to move and induce them to the resolution whereof I treat, the strongest and most forcible, considering human frailty, is the consideration of punishments prepared by him for rebellious sinners, and transgressors of his commandments. Wherefore he uses this motive often, as may appear by all the prophets, who do almost nothing else but thunder out and threaten plagues and destruction to offenders. And this has oftentimes prevailed more than any other that *The force of fear.* could be used, by reason of the natural love which we bear towards ourselves; and consequently the natural fear which we have of our own danger. So we read that nothing could move the Ninivites so much, *Jon. i.* as the foretelling them of their imminent destruction. And St. John Baptist, although he came in a simple and contemptible manner, *Matt iii.* yet preaching unto the people the terror and vengeance to come, and that the axe was now put to the tree, to cut down for the fire all such as repented not, *Luke iii.* he moved the very publicans, and soldiers to fear, in such sort, that they came unto him upon his terrible embassy, and asked what they should do to avoid these punishments.

For which cause, having considered in the former chapter, death, and God's severe judgment, wherein every man is to receive according to his work in this life; it follows, that we consider also the punishments which are appointed for them that will be found faulty in that day of account, hereby at least: if no other consideration will serve to induce

Of God's punishments in general.

Christians to this resolution of serving God. For as I have noted before, if every man has naturally a love for himself, and desires to conserve his own ease : then he should also fear the danger of falling into misery and calamity. This St. Bernard expresses very excellently according to his custom.* ‘O man, says he, if thou hast left all shame, which
 ‘ appertains to so noble a creature as thou art, if thou feel-
 ‘ est no sorrow, as carnal men do not, yet lose not fear al-
 ‘ so, which is found even in brute and savage beasts. We
 ‘ used to load an ass, and to weary him out with labour, and
 ‘ he cares not, because he is an ass: but if thou wouldst
 ‘ trust him into the fire, or fling him into a ditch, he would
 ‘ avoid it as much as he could, because he loves life, and
 ‘ fears death. Fear thou then, and be not more insensible
 ‘ than a brute beast: fear death, fear judgment, fear hell.
 ‘ This fear is called the beginning of wisdom, and not shame
 ‘ and sorrow; because the spirit of fear is more po-
 ‘ tent to resist sin, than the spirit of shame and
 ‘ sorrow. Wherefore it is said, *Remember the end,*
 ‘ *and thou shalt never sin*; that is, remember the final pu-
 ‘ nishments appointed for sin after this life.’ Thus far holy St. Bernard.

*Three con-
 jectures of
 the great-
 ness of pu-
 nishment.*

First, therefore, to speak in general of the punishments reserved in the life to come, if the scriptures did not declare in particular their greatness unto us, yet are there many reasons to persuade us that they are most severe, grievous, and intolerable. For first as God is a God in all his works, that is to say, great, wonderful, and terrible : so especially he shows the same in his punishments, when he takes upon him to punish, being called for that purpose in holy scripture, both God of Justice, and God of revenge. And the prophet David does so much exaggerate the terrors of God’s punishments, that he does not only say twice to God in one Psalm; *Psalm lxxxix. In ira tua defecimus* : we cannot subsist or stand in thy wrath; but adds also this exaggerative interrogation ; ‘Who knoweth the power of thy anger ? and for thy fear can number thy wrath ?’ Wherefore seeing all his other works are so majestical and exceeding our capacities as we experience daily, we may likewise gather, that in punishing

*His Ma-
 jesty*

* In ferm. de primordiis, mediis and novissimis nostris.

he is no less wonderful. God himself teaches us to reason in this manner, when he says, *Jer. v.* ‘Will not you then fear me, saith the Lord : and will not you repent at my presence? I have set the sand abound for the sea, an everlasting ordinance, which it shall not pass over, and the waves thereof shall toss themselves, and shall not prevail : they shall swell, and shall not pass over it.’ As who would say, if I be wonderful and pass your imagination in these works of the sea, and others of this world, which you behold daily : you have just cause to fear me, considering that my punishments are like to be correspondent to the greatness of my other actions.

Another conjecture of the great and severe justice of God in punishing, may be the consideration of his infinite and unspeakable mercy ; which as it is the very nature itself of God, and consequently without end or measure as his Godhead is ; so is also his justice. And these two are the two arms, as it were of his divine majesty embracing and kissing one the other, as the scripture says. And therefore as, if we had the measure of a man’s arm, we might easily conjecture the length of the other ; so beholding daily the wonderful examples of God’s infinite mercy towards them that repent, we may thereby conceive the severity of his justice towards such as he reserves to punishment in the life to come, and whom for that case, he calls in holy writ, *Isaiah xiii Vasa furoris* ; that is vessels of fury whereon to exercise the rage of his dreadful and most terrible indignation.

A third consideration to induce us to the understanding of the greatness of God’s punishments in general, may be his marvellous patience and long suffering of sinners in this life. So for example, he suffers divers men from sin to sin, from day to day, from year to year, and from age to age, to live continually in that contempt of his majesty, and transgression of his commandments ; rejecting all persuasion, allurements, inspirations, and other means of grace and favour that his merciful goodness offers for their amendment : and what man in the world could suffer this ? or what mortal heart is able to show such patience ? we say of men, that patience abused turns itself into rage ; but God’s patience we see daily in this world, not only abused and exasperated by the perseverance of sinners in their sins, but neglected and contemned also. Wherefore if this should not be requited with severity of

*God’s
mercy.*

*God’s pa-
tience.*

punishment, in the world to come, it might seem to be against the law of justice and equity. St. Paul, touches this reason in his epistle to the Romans, where he says, *Rom. ii.* ‘Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and patience, and long suffering? knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? but according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God who will render to every man, according to his works.’ In which sentence St. Paul uses the phrase of *heaping wrath or vengeance*, to signify thereby, that as the covetous man does lay up money daily to make his heap increase, so the unrepentant sinner does heap sin upon sin: and God on the contrary side heaps vengeance on vengeance, until his measure be full to restore in the end, measure against measure as the prophet says, *Isa. xxvii.* and to pay us as another prophet says, *Jer. xxv.* ‘According to their works, and according to the deeds of their hands.’

This was the meaning of Almighty God when he said to Abraham, *Gen. xv.* ‘The iniquities of the Amorrites are not at the full.’ As also the revelations unto St. John Evangelist, when he used this conclusion of that book: *Apoc. xxii.* ‘He that hurteth, let him hurt still: and he that is filthy let him be filthy still;—Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works.’ By which words God signifies that his forbearance, and toleration with sinners in this life, is a preparation of his greater severity in the life to come: which the prophet David insinuates in like manner, when talking of a careless sinner, he says, *Psalms xxxvi.* ‘But the Lord shall laugh at him: for he forseeth that his day shall come.’ By which day no doubt, is to be understood the day of account and punishment after this life; for so does God more at large declare himself in another place, in these words: *Ezek. vii.* ‘And thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God. Now is an end come upon thee, and I will send my wrath upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways: and I will set all thy abominations against thee. And my eye shall not spare thee, and I will show thee no pity: but I will lay thy ways upon thee, and thy abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and you shall know that I am the Lord. Now very shortly I will pour out my wrath upon thee, and I

‘ will accomplish my anger, in thee, and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and I will lay upon thee all thy crimes. And my eye shall not spare, neither will I show mercy ; but I will lay thy ways upon thee, and thy abominations shall be in the midst of thee : and you shall know that I am the Lord that strike.’ Hitherto is the speech of Almighty God, delivered by the mouth of his holy prophet Ezekiel.

SECT. II.—*Of temporal punishments after this life.*

SEEING then we now understand in general that the punishments of God in the life to come, will certainly be great and severe upon all such as fall into them, for which cause St. Paul affirms *Heb. x.* ‘ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’ Let us consider more particularly what manner of pains and punishments they will be. For better conceiving whereof, it is to be noted, that there are two sorts of sinners in this world ; the one who die in the guilt of mortal sin ; and in the disfavour and hatred of Almighty God, of whom it is said, *Apoc. xxi.* ‘ Their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone which is the second death.’ And Christ in the gospel *Matt. iii.* says of the same men : God shall burn these kind of men, which are but chaff, with unquenchable fire. The other, who have, the guilt of their sins pardoned by their repentance in this life, but yet have not made that temporal satisfaction to God’s justice, nor are so thoroughly purged in this world, as to pass to heaven without punishment ; of whom it is written by St. Paul : *1 Cor. iii.* ‘ He shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.’ Upon which words the holy father St. Augustine, writes thus :* ‘ Because St. Paul says, that these men shall be saved by fire, therefore this fire is condemned ; but surely, though they shall be saved by it, yet this fire is more grievous than whatsoever a man can suffer in this life ; although you know how great and intolerable things men have or may suffer.’ So he and the same St. Augustine in another place expounds yet further the words of the same apostle in this manner.† ‘ They who

* Aug. in Psalm xxxvii.

† Hom. 16. ex. 50. hom.

‘ have done things worthy of temporal punishments, of whom the apostle says ; 1 *Cor.* iii. they shall be saved by fire, must pass through a fiery river, and most horrible shallows of burning flames, signified by the prophet, when he says, *Dan.* vii. And a flood of fire went before him ; and look how much matter there is left in their sins, so long must they stick in passing through ; how much the fault requires, so much shall the punishment of this fire revenge.’ And because the word of God does compare the soul of a sinner to a pot of brass, saying, ‘ Put the pot empty upon the coals, until the rust be melted off, therefore in this fire, all idle speeches, all filthy thoughts, all light sins will boil out and consume, which by a short way might have been separated from the soul in this life, by alms, and tears.’ Hitherto St. Augustine.

And the same holy father in another place has yet further these words.* ‘ If a sinner by his repentance and conversion escape death and obtain life ; yet for all that, I cannot promise him, that he will escape all pain and punishment. For he that deferred the fruit of repentance until the next life must be perfected in purgatory in fire ; and this fire, I tell you, though it be not everlasting, yet it is extremely grievous ; for it does far exceed all pains that man can suffer in this life. Never was there found out yet so great a pain in flesh, as that is, though Martyrs have suffered strange torments, and many malefactors have suffered exceeding great punishments and torments for their evil acts.’

To the like effect does St. Gregory write† of the severity of this punishment, expounding those words of David : *Psalm* xxxvii. ‘ Rebuke me not, O Lord, in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath. This is, as if he said, says St. Gregory, I know that after this life, some must be cleansed by purging fire, and others must receive sentence of eternal damnation. But because I esteem that purging fire, though it be transitory to be more intolerable, than all the tribulation which in this life can be suffered ; therefore I do not only desire not to be rebuked in the fury

The grievousness of pains in the purging fire.

*Lib. de vera et falsa pœnitentia cap. 18. †Gregor. in *Psalm* tertium pœnitent

‘ of eternal damnation ; but also I greatly fear to be purged in the wrath of transitory correction.’ Thus far St. Gregory. And I might add a hundred such like other sayings out of the ancient holy fathers, touching the extreme severity of this purging fire after death, and the great fear which they had thereof. But what is already said may be sufficient to give admonition to Catholics, that agree with these saints in belief of this doctrine, to look more carefully to themselves, to avoid the rigour of this fire, especially by these two principal means of alms-deeds, and tears, whereunto St. Augustine most earnestly exhorts them in the place before alledged;* where he also makes this discourse ; ‘ You know, (says he,) how great pains wicked men have, or may suffer in this life and yet they have suffered no greater than good men may also suffer, and have suffered. For whatsoever malefactors, thieves, and adulterers, murderers, wicked and sacrilegious people have suffered by laws, no less grievous have martyrs suffered for the confession of Christ, and both these are much more easy than the purging fire before mentioned : this fire is more grievous than whatsoever a man can suffer in this life. How diligently then ought we to do that little which God commands us, to avoid that fire.’ These were the sentiments the learned St. Augustine had in these affairs.

And truly it is very strange and wonderful to consider, how great fear, and terror holy men of ancient times conceived at the very thought of this fire ; and how slenderly we pass the same over now a-days, having infinite more cause to fear than they had. Among others, that blessed devout man St. Bernard, who led so exemplary and strict a life, as the world knows, entering into contemplation of this matter, broke forth into these ensuing words:† ‘ O would to God some man would now before-hand provide for my head abundance of water, and for my eyes a fountain of tears : for perhaps the burning fire would take no hold, where the running tears had cleansed before.’ And again in another place;‡ ‘ I tremble and shake for fear of falling into God’s hands. I would gladly present myself before his face already judged by myself, and not to

* Augustine in Psal xxxvii. † Bernard ser de sex tribulationibus, 16 and 55. in Can. ‡ Cap. 16. and. 55. in Can

‘ be judged then by him. Therefore, I will make a reckoning whilst I am here, both of my good deeds and of my bad. My evil deeds shall be corrected with better works, they shall be watered with tears; they shall be punished by fasting; they shall be amended by sharp disciplines. I will rip up the very bottom of my ways and works, to the end he may find nothing untried at that day, or not fully discussed to his hands. And then I hope in his mercy, that as he has promised, he will not judge the same faults again. Hitherto are the words of St. Bernard. And it is no marvel that his fear and solicitude, to avoid these temporal punishments in the next life was so great: seeing that in another work of his, he has these words: * ‘ Know ye that what sins soever have been neglected by us here in this life, they will be punished afterwards a hundred fold in the purging places of the life to come.’

The like great fear uttered holy St. Ambrose in these words: † ‘ Know ye that what sins soever have been neglected by us here in this life, they will be punished afterwards a hundred fold in the purging places of the life to come.’

The like great fear uttered holy St. Ambrose in these words: † ‘ O Lord, if thou reserve any thing in me to be revenged in the next life; yet I humbly beseech thee that thou givest me not up to the power of wicked spirits, whilst thou wipest away my sins by the pains of purgatory. And again in another place; § ‘ I shall be searched, and examined as lead, in this fire, and I must burn till all the lead is melted away. And if then there be found no silver metal in me; wo be to me, for I must be thrust down to the profoundest part of hell, or else wholly wasted away, as straw in the fire. But if any gold or silver be found in me, not through my works, but by grace, and Christ’s mercy, and through the ministry of my priesthood, I shall once say, surely they that trust in thee shall never be confounded.’

This was the feeling fear which these holy men had of the judgments of Almighty God and of the temporal punishments after this life. And now let us lay our hands upon

* Cap. 16. & 55. in Can. † Bern. ser. de obitu. Hamberti. † Ambros. Præcat. præparat. 2 Ad. Missam. § Serm. 20. in Psalm. 118.

our hearts, and think that when these great saints, these great pillars of the Church do utter this dread, having lived as they had; what ought we to do, living as we do? for when we hear these men speak, we must imagine to hear the whole Church of God of those times, with all the saints thereof, to speak to us the same: for their judgment, faith, and feeling was all one. Let us hear then yet a little further, if you please, what they say to us, in this behalf, what counsel they give us, what forewarning and caveat they lay before us for our greatest good.

How much the holy fathers words and examples ought to move us.

First of all, the aforesaid holy father St. Augustine (o whom we mean in this place most to serve ourselves, for he seems above all other fathers to have made most particular consideration and reflection upon this matter) to stir us up to vigilancy in this behalf, writes thus upon those words of Genesis.* Gen. iii. 19. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. He that does not till his ground well, but suffers the same to be overgrown with thorns, shall feel the malediction of his said ground in this life, in all his works; and after this life, he shall feel in the next world the purging fire, or pains everlasting; so that no man can escape that sentence; and therefore we ought to procure, that our sufferings may be rather in this life than in the next.' This is his counsel, which in many other places he urges, as good and profitable.

'I beseech you, brethren, says he, in an another place,† hear my words, and make profit of them, &c. Whosoever lives after a certain kind of a carnal life in this world, and yet departs not from the lap of Christ's Church nor is seduced by heretics, or divided into a contrary part, he shall be purged by a fiery furnace, for without this furnace, he cannot be placed at the right hand of God.' So he.

And because some rash, inconsiderate and careless people of his time, as now also are found among Catholics, though they doubted not of these punishments, or of the rigour thereof; yet showed not so great fear and care to avoid them, as they should, because they were only temporal, and not eternal; he reprehends greatly this consi-

* Aug. lib. 2. Gen. & Con Manich. cap 20. † Aug. con. 2. in Psal.

deration, in these words:* ‘Some used to say, *I care not greatly how long soever I stay in passing this fire, seeing that at last I shall attain to life everlasting*: But alas! dear brother; let no man say thus; for this purgatory-fire is more sharp than any punishment, which in this life can be seen, imagined, or felt. And whereas it is said of the day of judgment, *Psalm lxxxix.* That a thousand years in thy sight *are* as yesterday which is past; how does any man know whether his passage through this fire be for days or months, or perhaps years? and he that now will be loath to put one of his fingers into burning fire, ought to fear the torment both of body and soul in that fire, though it were but for a little time. And therefore let every man labour with all his forces, to avoid mortal sins, which cast into hell, and to redeem lesser sins by good works, so that no part of them remain to be consumed by that fire.’ This is St. Augustine’s exhortation; and he that loves his own good, will hearken to it.

Mark this reason of St. Augustine.

And yet further, a little after in the same place, this holy father having spoken of the everlasting pains of the damned in hell, as also of these temporal punishments in purgatory, he concludes thus: ‘And therefore those who desire to be delivered both from these perpetual pains, as also this temporal purging fire, let them not commit deadly sins. And if they have heretofore committed them, let them not cease daily to redeem them with good works. And therefore by continual prayers and frequent fastings, and large alms, and especially by forgiving them that have offended against us, must ordinary daily sins be redeemed, lest they multiplying and growing to a great heap, should depress and drown our soul. Of which sins, whatsoever is not redeemed by us in this life must be purged by that fire, whereof the apostle speaks: *1 Cor. iii.* That he who built straw, stubble, and other such matter upon the foundation of his belief should suffer loss, but yet be saved, as by fire.’ Thus far St. Augustine, who gives the same exposition of St. Paul’s words†

* Aug. ser. 41. de Sanctis. † Enchir. c. 67, & 68. & lib. de fide & operibus 14, 15, 16, & lib. 21. de civit. c. 21 & in Ps. 80.

in many other places also of his works, which are over long to repeat : but hereby his judgment, sense, and feeling in this affair, are evidently declared.

Wherefore, to conclude this matter, we see here divers points touched by St. Augustine : as — *Points to be noted out of St. Augustine.*
 first, what difference there is between them that sin deadly, and die without repentance, and go directly to everlasting punishments for the same, (as presently you shall hear him more particularly avouch) and those others whose sins are less grievous, and called by divines, venial, because they separate us not wholly from Gods grace, nor do make us guilty of everlasting damnation, which sins are punished only with temporal pains in the next life, and not eternally. Secondly, St. Augustine teaches that although these pains are not eternal, yet are they so grievous, that all wise and good Christians ought greatly to fear them, they exceeding, in his opinion, the rigour of any worldly pains or punishments that can be devised. Thirdly, how great our care ought to be, not only utterly to fly and avoid greater sins which make us guilty of eternal damnation ; but these ordinary lesser sins also, as far as we can : and that such, as through frailty do creep upon us, ought to be remedied and wiped away by sorrowful sighs, and practice of other good works. All which points do declare to us, what an exact rule of Christian life is required of us by our Saviour, and how diligent, fearful, and careful those ancient fathers were in performing the same ; and how diligent, slothful, and careless we are now a-days in this important point.

And so for final conclusion of this matter, it may be observed, that the common belief of these purging pains of the next life, was so universally received in St. Augustine's time, that divers did pass to the other extremity, to think that all kinds of sins and sinners might be purged and saved by this fire : which error St. Augustine himself refutes in divers parts of his works. One place will serve for an example. Thus when he writes in his *Enchiridion** certain men are of belief, that all such as retain the name of Christ, and are baptized in his church, and are not cut off from the same, by schism or heresy, will be saved by this fire, though they live never so wickedly, and although their sins be neither wiped away with penance, nor redeemed with

* *Enchir.* c. 67.

alms-deeds in this life ; yea, though they persevere therein even till their last day ; notwithstanding they grant their punishment will be long according to the greatness of their sins, though not everlasting. But they who believe this, and yet are Catholics, are deceived. For if we consult holy scripture, we shall find another answer. For the apostle's words are plain : 1 *Cor.* vi. ' Be not deceived, ' neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, &c. ' shall possess the kingdom of God : But if these men, ' persevering in these sins, should notwithstanding for the ' faith of Christ which they hold, be saved, passing through ' this fire, then would they also be received into the kingdom of God,' which is contrary to the former words of St Paul.

Thus far St. Augustine, whereby we may see, how far men in his days were from divers in ours, that believe no purging fire at all, which these other men would have to serve also for mortal sins never so grievous. But it was an error running to the other extreme, as has been declared. And the reason hereof is, because these, who are to receive benefit by this purging fire, die in the state of God's grace, and are his children, and so as children have this favour, that they may after their death be relieved by the help of others, that pray, and do good deeds for them ; and principally by the public sacrifice of the church, which to the others, though Catholics, if they die in the guilt of mortal sin, cannot avail, nor be profitable. So that to use St. Augustine's words :* ' A man must merit in this world by a good ' life, that these helps of others may avail him after his ' death.' And this doctrine, the holy father does every where inculcate in the name of the whole church of God ; wherefore I shall only give thee, good reader, an example or two for thy better instruction, and exhortation to piety, out of many places of St. Augustine's works that may be alledged.

First then in his book, of the City of God, after a long and pious consideration of this matter, he has these words :† ' For some men, after their death, the prayers of the church, ' or of pious people are heard ; but it is for such who after ' their baptism neither lived so ill, as to be judged unworthy of such mercy, neither yet so well, as not to need ' such mercy.' So this good father. But yet more at large does he expound the matter in another place of his

* Aug. Enchir. cap. 110. † Aug. lib. 21. de Civit. Dei. c. 24.

works in these words :* ‘ No man ought to doubt, but that
 ‘ the souls departed from this world, are helped by the
 ‘ prayers and sacrifices of the holy church, and the alms-
 ‘ deeds which are done for them, whereby Almighty God
 ‘ is moved to deal more mercifully with them, than their
 ‘ sins have deserved. For the universal church of Christ
 ‘ does observe and practice this, as received from our an-
 ‘ cient forefathers, that when commemoration is made, in
 ‘ due place of the sacrifice for such as are departed in the
 ‘ communion of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour:
 ‘ that then the said sacrifice is offered also for them, &c.
 ‘ But this must be done for such men only, ‘ Who did live
 ‘ so before their death, that these things might
 ‘ be profitable to them after their death.’ For *What sort*
 ‘ as for others, that went out of this world with- *of men are*
 ‘ out that faith which the apostle says, ‘ *Ephes. other men’s*
 ‘ v. does work by charity; in vain are these *prayers af-*
 ‘ good offices of piety done for them, who had *ter death.*
 no piety when they lived on earth, to merit this.’ So he.

And yet more exactly does he urge this matter in his
 Enchiridion,† or instruction to the simple; because he
 would have the matter the better to be remembered, and
 imprinted in the hearts of all good Christians, and Catholic
 people. ‘ It is not to be denied, says he, but that the souls
 ‘ of them that are departed, are much relieved by the piety
 ‘ of their living friends; when either the sacrifice of our
 ‘ mediator is offered for them, or alms are given in the
 ‘ church in their behalf: But yet these things do only
 ‘ profit such, as deserved, while they lived, that these helps
 ‘ might profit them after their death: For that there is a
 ‘ certain state of life, neither so good, but that it may have
 ‘ need of these helps after death, neither yet so evil, but
 ‘ that these offices may profit them. And on the contrary,
 ‘ there is another state of men so good as not to need this
 ‘ help. And a state of others so evil that they cannot be
 ‘ helped by it, when they are once dead. ‘ Wherefore
 ‘ here in this life all merit is gotten, whereby af-
 ‘ ter this life a man may be relieved or not.’ And *Different*
 ‘ let no man hope, that after his death he will *states of*
 ‘ be able to merit at God’s hand, which he neg- *livers in*
 ‘ lected to deserve while he lived, &c.’ *this world.*

* Aug. ser. 34. de verd. Apost.—† Aug. in Enchirid. cap. 100.

Thus this holy father not only instructs us, what the holy church of Christ in his days, did both believe, teach, and practise concerning this affair: but stirs us up also with holy stings of devotion, to the like, both for ourselves, and for our friends that are dead. For ourselves, by endeavouring now, by a good life, to make ourselves capable of these holy helps after our death: and for our friends, to be faithful and solicitous for them after they are departed, that these holy helps be procured and performed for them, especially for such as we think did die, so that these helps may profit them; that is to say, such as died in the Catholic faith, and received her sacraments before their departure. For to this conclusion St. Augustine returns again presently in the same place, as principally to be borne in mind, to wit: 'That not all sorts of men; but some only, are in case to 'take benefit by these helps of the church;' that is to say, neither those that are very evil, and are thrown down immediately into hell: nor those who having lived very piously go strait to heaven, but a middle sort of people between these both, who may be presumed to be the greatest part of Catholic Christians, whose faith being secure, though in this life they have committed mortal sins: yet dying repentant, and receiving the sacraments of the church, the guilt is remitted, and so there only remains ordinarily some temporal satisfaction to be paid in this purging fire, as we have heard St. Augustine declare unto us before.

And yet further it is to be noted, that although in this life, we cannot know certainly of those that die, who appertain to one sort, and who to the other; who go directly to heaven, who to hell, and who remain in purgatory, except only martyrs, of whom the church assures us that they presently pass to heaven; upon which ground St. Cyprian says, 'That it is an injury to martyrdom to pray for martyrs,' yet notwithstanding when the matter is in doubt, we may in charity pray for all; and you shall hear the reason out of St. Augustine's own words. For thus he writes, repeating again the former distinction of three sorts of people that die in different states and condition of life.

'I have said before,' says he,* 'that these offices of the 'church, and of pious people, do not profit all men that 'are dead: and why do they not profit all, but for the dif-

* Aug. Ibid. ubi supra.

ference of life, that each man led in his body? whensoever then either the sacrifice of the altar, or whatsoever alms-deeds are offered up in general for all baptized Christians that are departed out of this life; these oblations for such as are very good, are thanksgivings; and for such as are not very evil, they are propitiations, or obtainings of pardon, and for such as died very evil, although they yield no help to the dead, yet are they certain consolations to the living, and whom they do profit, it is unto this that either their sins may wholly be forgiven, or at least that their sufferings thereby might be made more tolerable.

Thus he. And for further proof, that in doubtful cases we may pray for all, let us hear how St. Augustine prayed and offered sacrifice for his mother called Monica, after she was dead, though he held her for a holy woman, and that her sins were already wholly forgiven, before he prayed for her.* 'I beseech thee good Lord, says he, even by the wounds of him that hanged on the cross for us, and sits at thy right hand to make intercession for us, that thou forgive the sins of my mother. I know that she exercised herself in the works of mercy, and forgave from her heart all her enemies and debtors: forgive her good Lord, her debts, forgive, forgive, I beseech thee, and enter not with her into judgment: thou hast promised mercy to them that are merciful. And although I do believe that thou hast done already that which I do ask for my mother, *Psalm cxlii. yet let these voluntary prayers of mine be acceptable unto thee*; for that she being near unto her death, did not think how to have her body sumptuously buried, or the same to be embalmed with sweet perfumes, or to have any choice monument or sepulchre erected unto her in her country; no, she did not ordain any of these things unto us that stood about her, but only desired that her memory might be made at thy altar, which she served with such diligence, that she never omitted any one day to be present, knowing that from thence is dispensed that holy Host or Sacrifice, whereby is blotted out the guilt of the world.'

Thus writes St. Augustine of his own, and his mother's devotion. And now tell me, good reader, what judicious or discreet man in the world

A considerable demand.

* Aug. lib 9. Confess. c. 13.

would not rather adventure his soul with these holy people, and with the whole Church of Christ in their ancient days, (for we must presume that the universal Christian and Catholic Church in St. Augustine's time did believe, teach, and practise no other than St. Augustine himself did, who was a chief pillar thereof;) what man, I say of judgment, discourse, or care towards his own soul, will not rather adventure the same with St. Augustine, and others of his faith, learning, gravity, and merits, than with a new set of people in our days, who laugh at these things, and do assure unto men salvation without either prayers or punishments, or pains at all; and who being afraid or esteeming it over laborious to enter into any particular accounts of their own life and actions in this world, or into any care or solicitude for satisfying in the next; have resolved rather to break with all: not unlike unto certain broken and bankrupt merchants, who seeing themselves overwhelmed with debts, do think it the best way to cast from them their account books, or cut them in pieces, to the end they may never be forced to come to a particular reckoning.

But our Saviour Christ does teach us *Matt. v.* another far different course, warning us to agree with our adversary or creditor, while we are here in the way of this life, lest we being once cast into prison, as careless bankrupts oftentimes are, we be forced to pay the uttermost farthing: for to this meaning does holy St. Cyprian* interpret this parable which is so effectual an exhortation for us to look about us, whilst we are in a state to help ourselves, and to make all accounts clear in this life; that none but careless or conscienceless people will neglect the same. And thus much of this sort of men that are to suffer temporal punishments in the life to come.

SECT. III.—*Of the everlasting punishments which the damned are to suffer in the next life.*

BUT now to pass from this sort of people to the other, whose lot must be in everlasting fire, *Cum ardoribus sempiternis*, says the scripture, *Isa. xxxiii.* with eternal flames and burnings, and yet never to be consumed; I mean, the reprobates that die in God's disfavour, be they Pagans, Heretics, Schismatics, or evil-living Catholics, of whom St.

* Cypr. ep. ad Antonium.

Augustine has spoken before : these are in far worse case, and more pitiful plight. For although according to some divines the fire of hell and purgatory be all one in substance, and the pains of the one, as grievous as the other, during the time ; yet the difference between eternity and temporality in the durance thereof, is of such infinite importance, that there can be made no comparison at all : besides that, the helps and alleviations which Christians receive in the purging fire, together with the assurance of their final salvation, and hourly hope of their delivery, abbreviation, or mitigation of their pains, do exceedingly comfort them in that case. Whereunto if you add the presence of God's grace, the knowledge that they are in his favour, and in the unity and participation of his Catholic Church, from which daily they receive some sort or other of ease ; the visitation of angels ; which as their brethren do come to animate and encourage them in their sufferings (of all which points no one is granted or permitted to them that are damned :) all these things, I say, being laid together, do make the two states almost as different as hell and heaven, though purgatory were also a kind of hell for the time.

And according to this proportion, we must conceive, that if the punishment of this purging fire be so dreadful a thing, as St. Augustine and other fathers before have declared : what will the pains of hell itself be ? and in this respect the saying of our Saviour, which he spoke to the good woman of Jerusalem, who lamented his case when he was going to his passion, may be considered : *Luke xxiii.* ' If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be ' done in the dry ? ' which words St. Peter seems in some part to expound, when he says *1 Pet. iv.* ' For the time is ' that judgment shall begin at the house of God : and if ' first at us, what shall be the end of those that believe not ' the gospel of God ? ' If those that die in God's grace, and in the unity of his holy Catholic Church, and will in the end be saved, and reign eternally with him, be notwithstanding to be punished so severely for smaller faults : how will the reprobate and damned, that are his enemies and members of the devil, be punished in hell fire prepared for them for their everlasting torment ? truly no understanding, no tongue, no pen, no thoughts can express the greatness, rigour, dread, or desolation of that punishment : yet shall I endeavour for our better admonition and prevention,

to set down briefly some of the considerations and contemplations, speeches and sentences, which the holy scripture and ancient fathers do deliver unto us for our warning in this behalf.

And first of all, concerning the place itself of punishment appointed for the damned, commonly called hell: the scripture in divers languages uses divers names, but all tending to express the grievousness of torments therein to be endured, as for example in the Latin tongue, it is called *Infernus*, that is a place beneath or under ground, as most of the old fathers, St. Augustine in particular,* do interpret. But whether it be under ground or no, most certain it is, that it is a place most opposite to heaven, which is said to be above, and from which Lucifer was thrown down. And this name is used to show the miserable dejection and hurling down of the damned, to be trodden under the feet, not only of Almighty God, but also of all good men for ever. For so says the scripture: *Mal. iv.* ‘Behold the day shall come kindled as a furnace: and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall set them on fire, &c. But unto you that fear my name the son of justice shall arise, and you shall tread down the wicked when they shall be ashes under the sole of your feet in the day that I do *this*, saith the Lord of Hosts.’ And this will be one of the greatest miseries that can happen to the proud and stout potentates of the world, to be thrown down with such contempt, and to be trodden under the feet of them, whom they so much despised in this world.

The Hebrew word which the scripture uses for hell, *Isa. xiv.* is *Seol*, which signifies properly a great ditch or dungeon. In which sense, the same place is also called in the Apocalypse, *Apoc. xiv.* the lake of God’s wrath. And again, *Apoc. xx.* a pool burning with fire and brimstone. In Greek, the scripture uses three words for the same place. The first is *Hades*, used in the gospel, *Matt. xi.* which, as Plutarch notes,† signifies a place where there is no light. The second is *Zophos*, in St. Peter, which signifies darkness itself. In which sense it is called also by Job, *Job x.*

* Aug. lib. 2. retract. cap. 24. † In com. supra. vive latenter.

a land that is dark and covered with the mist of death. Also in the Gospel, *Matt. xxii.* utter darkness. The third Greek word is *Tartaros*, used by St. Peter; which word being derived from the verb *tarasso* (which signifies to terrify, trouble, and vex) imports a horrible confusion of torments in that place: even as Job says, *Job x.* ‘Where no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth.’ Which the Holy Ghost in another place describes more at large in these words, *Eccli. xxxix. 33.* ‘There are spirits that are created for vengeance, and in their fury they lay on grievous torments. In the time of destruction they shall pour out their force: and they shall appease the wrath of him that made them. Fire, hail, famine, and death all these were created for vengeance.’

The Chaldean word, which is also used in Hebrew, and translated into Greek, is *Gehenna*, first of all used by Christ our Saviour, for the place of those who are damned, as St. Jerom notes upon the tenth chapter of St. Matthew’s gospel. And this word being compounded of *gee* and *hinnon*, signified a valley nigh Jerusalem, called the valley of Hinnon: in which the idolatrous Jews were wont to burn alive their own children, in honour of the devil, and to sound with trumpets, timbrils, and other loud instruments, whilst they were making this abominable sacrifice, to the end, the pitiful shrieks and cries of their children might not be heard.

And this place was afterwards used for the receipt of all filthiness, dung, dead carrion, and the like. And most probable it is, that our Saviour used this word *Gehenna*, above all others, for hell, thereby to signify the miserable burning of souls in that place, the pitiful clamours and cries of the tormented, the confused and barbarous noise of the tormenters, together with the most loathsome filthiness of the place; which otherwise is described in the scriptures, by the names of adders, snakes, cockatrices, scorpions, and other venomous creatures, as has been and shall be afterwards declared. And with this word *Gehenna*, concurs also in signification another, used by the prophet Isaiah, to denote the same place, that is to say, *Topheth*, which properly signifies the aforesaid valley of the children of Hinnon; but is applied expressly, to declare and represent the most horrible dungeon of damned souls. Which Isaiah talking of God as of a great king, describes in these words, *Isaiah xxx.* ‘For

*The valley
Hinnon.*

*The loath-
someness
of hell.*

Topheth is prepared from yesterday, prepared by the king, 'deep, and wide. The nourishments thereof is fire and much wood : the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it.'

And now having thus declared the names of this place, and thereby also, in some part, the nature : it remains that we examine what manner of pains men suffer in the same. For declaration whereof we must consider, that as heaven and hell are contrary, assigned to contrary persons for contrary causes : so have they in all respects contrary properties, conditions and effects ; in such sort that whatsoever is spoken of the felicity of the one, may serve to infer the calamity of the other : as for example, when St. Paul says, *1 Cor. ii.* 'The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love him.' We may infer that the pains of the damned must be of like proportion. So again, when the scripture says, *Exod. xxxiii.* 'That the felicity of them in heaven is a perfect felicity, containing all goodness, so that no one kind of pleasure can be imagined which they possess not. We must think on the contrary, that the misery of the damned must be also an absolute misery, containing all possible afflictions. So that as the happiness of the good is so infinite and universal, so is the calamity of the wicked infinite and universal also. Now in this life all the miseries and pains which fall upon man, are but particular and not universal : as for example, we see one man pained in his eyes, another in his teeth, another in his stomach, another in his back ; which particular pains notwithstanding are sometimes so extreme, that life is not able to resist them, and a man would not suffer them long for the gaining of a million of worlds.

But suppose that some one man was tormented in all the parts of his body at once ; as in his head, his eyes, his tongue, his teeth, his stomach, and all other joints and members of his body besides : suppose, I say, he were most cruelly tormented with extreme pains in all these parts together, without ease or intermission ; what could be more miserable than this ? what sight more lamentable ? what calamity more unspeakable ? if thou shouldst see but a brute beast lie in the street thus afflicted, I know thou couldst not but take compassion of him. Consider then what differ-

*Of the
pains of
hell.*

*The pains
of hell in-
finite and
universal.*

ence there is between abiding these pains for a week, and for all eternity ; in suffering them upon a soft bed, and upon a burning grid-iron, and boiling furnace : among a man's friends comforting him, or among the furies of hell whipping and tormenting him. Consider this, I say, gentle reader, and if thou wouldst take a great deal of labour, rather than abide the one temporarily in this life ; be content to sustain a little pain, rather than to incur the other eternally, in the life to come.

But yet to penetrate these things a little further, not only all these parts of the body which have been instruments to sin, will be tormented together in this place of punishment ; but also every sense both external and internal, for the same cause, will be afflicted with its particular torment, contrary to the object wherein it delighted most and took pleasure in this world : as for example ; the lascivious eyes will be afflicted with the ugly and fearful sight of devils ; the delicate ears, with the horrible noise of damned spirits ; the dainty nostrils, with poisoned stench of brimstone, and other unsupportable filth, the delicate taste with most ravenous hunger and unquenchable thirst ; and all the sensible parts of the body, with burning fire. As also inwardly, the imagination of the damned will be tormented with the apprehension of pains both present and to come : the memory, with remembrance of pleasures past : the understanding with consideration of the felicity lost, and the misery now come upon them. O poor Christian ! what wilt thou do amidst the multitude of such intolerable calamities.

It is a wonderful matter, and able, as a holy father says, to make a reasonable man go out of his wits, to consider what God has revealed to us in the scriptures touching the dreadful circumstances of this punishment, and yet to see how little the careless men of this world do fear it. For first, touching the universality, variety, greatness, and extremity of the pains, not only the reasons before alledged, but also divers others considerations in the scriptures, declare the same. As where it is said of the damned, *Apoc. xx. Cruciabuntur die and nocte* : they shall be tormented day and night. And again, *Apoc. xviii. Date illi tormentum* ; give her torment ; speaking of Babylon in

How every part has its particular torments in hell.

The pains of hell exercised for torment, and not for chastisement.

hell. By which words of torture, and torment may well appear, that the pains of hell are exercised not for chastisement, but for affliction only, and torments of the patients. And if we see commonly in this world, that tortures and torments are as great, violent, and extreme, as the wit of man can reach to devise : imagine then good brother, when God Almighty will use his infinite wisdom to create torments as he has done in hell, what manner of torments they are like to be.

The fierce nature of hell fire. with the differences from ours. If creating an element here for our comfort, I mean the fire, he made the same unsufferable as it is, in such sort, that a man would not hold his hand therein one day for to gain a kingdom : what a fire think you, has he provided for hell,, which is not provided for comfort, but only for torment ? our fire has a thousand differences from that, and therefore is truly said by the holy fathers, to be but as a painted or feigned fire in respect of it. For first, our fire was made to comfort, as I have said, and that to afflict and torment. Our fire has need to be fed continually with wood and fuel, or else it goes out ; that burns eternally without feeding, and is unquenchable : ‘ *For (as Isaiah says) Isaiah xxx. ‘ the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it.*’ Our fire gives light, which of itself is comfortable ; that admits none. but has the desolation of inexplicable darkness. Ours is out of its natural place and situation, and consequently of less force than it would be there ; for which cause also we see, that it endeavours with all force to mount up, and get from us : but that of hell is in the natural and proper place wherein it was created and therefore has all its full strength and abides perpetually. Ours consumes the food that is cast into it, and thereby in a short space dispatches the pains : that afflicts and torments, but consumes not, to the end the pains be everlasting. Our fire is extinguished with water, and the rage thereof greatly abated by the coldness of the air and other elements about it : that has no such abatement or qualification at all, but has its absolute force remaining in all fury. And finally what a strange and incredible kind of fire that is, may appear in part, by these words of our Saviour, so often repeated in the gospel ; ‘ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For weeping seems properly to be referred to the effect of extreme burning in that fire, seeing the pains of scalding and burning do force tears sooner than any other pains ;

as appears in them, who upon a sudden to put any burning thing into their mouth, or do vehemently scald any tender and sensible part of their body. And gnashing or chattering of teeth, as every man knows, proceeds principally from great and extreme cold. Imagine then, my brother, what fire this is, which has such contrary extreme effects both of heat and cold. O mighty Lord, what a strange God art thou ! how wonderful and terrible in all thy works and inventions ! how bountiful art thou to those that love and serve thee : and how severe and terrible to those who condemn thy commandments ! hast thou devised a way how they who are burning in a lake of fire and brimstone shall also be tormented with extreme cold ? what understanding of man can conceive how this can be ? but thy judgments, O Lord, are depth without bottom, and therefore I leave this to thy providence, praising thee eternally for the same.

But now besides these general pains common to all that are in that place ; the scripture signifies also that there will be particular and several torments peculiar both in quality and quantity to the sins and offences of each offender. For to that end the prophet Isaiah says to God, *Isa.* xxvii. That he will judge 'in measure against measure, and Gad says of himself, *Isaiah* xxviii. 'I will set judgment in weight, and justice in measure.' And that is the meaning of all those threats of God to sinners, where he says, that he will pay them according to their particular works, and according to the inventions of their own hearts. In this sense it is said in the Apocalypse of Babylon, now thrown down into the lake, *Apoc.* xviii. 'As much as she hath glorified herself, and hath been in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give unto her.' From whence the holy fathers have gathered the variety of torments that will be in that place* 'As there are differences of sins, so there will be variety of torments, says Ephraim ; for the adulterer will have one kind of torment, the murderer another, the thief another, the drunkard another, the liar another.' And so he follows on, showing, how the proud man will be trodden under feet to recompence his pride : the glutton will suffer extreme hunger ; the drunkard extreme thirst ; the nice mouth will be filled with gall ; and the delicate body seared with hot burning irons. This

*Several
pains for
several
offenders.*

* Lib. de vera pœnit.

is the contemplation of this holy ancient father.

The rig- our of pains in hell. And yet further, besides all this universality, particularly, rigour, grievousness, and horror, which hitherto has been declared to be in these torments, the holy spirit of God reveals unto us

another condition or quality, no less terrible than the former, which is the most severe strictness thereof, without all possibility of any help, ease, intermission, relaxation, respiration, or comfort. This is signified by those severe words of our Saviour so oftentimes repeated; that the damned shall be cast into hell, bound hand and foot; that is, without being able to resist or struggle against their torments. Also by that most dreadful shutting up of the gate; whereof our Saviour spoke in such a doleful manner, when he said: the gate is shut up, and made fast forever: that is to say, in hell the gate of all mercy, of all pardon, of all ease, of all intermission, of all comfort, is shut forever; and that both from heaven, from earth, from the Creator, and from all creatures; insomuch that no consolation is ever more to be hoped for, (as in the miseries of this life there is always some,) but extreme desolation for all eternity.

This strictness is likewise most lively expressed in that dreadful parable of the rich glutton in hell, *Luke xvi.* who was driven to such necessity as to desire most earnestly, that Lazarus might dip the top only of his finger in water, therewith to cool his tongue, in the midst of that fire wherein he was tormented, and yet could not obtain it. A small refreshing it seems that would have been to him, if he had obtained his request; but yet to show the strictness of the place; it was denied him. O ye that live

The wonderful example of the rich glutton.

The pitiful case of the rich glutton. in sinful wealth of the world, consider but this one example of God's severity, and be afraid. This man was in such jollity a little before, that he would not give the very crumbs of his table to buy heaven; now would he give a thousand worlds, if he had them, for one drop of water to cool his tongue. Good God! what demand could be less than this? what request more humble? he durst not ask to be delivered thence, or to have his torments diminished, or to have a great vessel of water wherewith to refresh his whole body; but only so much as would stick to the top of Lazarus's finger to cool his

tongue. To what extreme need was this poor man now driven? what a strong imagination had he of the force of one drop of water? to what pitiful change was his tongue now come, that he was accustomed to be so daintily bathed, and diligently attended with all kinds of pleasant liquors?

O that one man cannot take example by another! O that Ooliba will not learn to be wise, by seeing the punishment of her elder sister Oolla. God revealed the calamity inflicted on the former of

The example of one moves not another.

her wickedness, thereby to terrify the latter from the like sins; but because she profited nothing by that example, he says: For so much as thou Ooliba hast walked in the ways of thy sister Oolla: this says God to thee: I will lay the cup of thy sister upon thee: thou shalt drink it as she did, both in depth and largeness: thou shalt drink it up, even unto the very dregs.

Thus said the prophet of God to Jerusalem, that would not be warned by the punishment of Samaria: and thus says the Son of God to all men that will not be terrified by these torments of the damned glutton. And if all this be true (as it must be, except the words of our Saviour could be false) then what wonderful people are we, that seeing ourselves in danger of this intolerable misery, do not seek with more diligence to prevent the same! In respect of these extremities and rigorous dealings of God, denying all comfort and consolation at this day of everlasting revenge, holy scripture says; *Apoc. xxii. 16.* that men will fall into rage, fury, and utter impatience, blaspheming God, and cursing the day of their nativity, eating their own tongues for grief, and desiring the rocks and mountains to come and fall upon them, thereby to end and finish their pains.

But now, if we add to all this, the eternity and everlasting continuance of these torments; we shall see, that it increases the matter beyond all human thoughts. For in this world there is no torment so great, or affliction so violent, but that time either takes away, or diminishes the same. For either the tormentor or the tormented dies, or some other occasion happens, whereby the extremity of the tribulation is mitigated. But here no such hope or comfort can be expected; for as holy writ affirms, *Apoc. xxi.* they shall be tormented forever and ever, in a pool that burns with fire and brimstone. As long as God is God, so long must they burn therein. Nei-

The eternity of the pains.

ther shall the tormentor or the tormented die, but both must live eternally, for the eternal misery of him that suffers.

A wonderful saying and consideration of eternity. O, says a holy father, in a pious meditation, if a sinner damned in hell, did know that he had to suffer these torments no more thousand years than there are sands in the sea, or no more, thousand millions of ages, than there are creatures in heaven, hell, and earth: he would gladly rejoice, for he would comfort himself at least with this thought; that his pains would have an end. But now this word NEVER breaks his heart, considering that after a hundred thousand millions of worlds, if there were to be so many, he has as far to his journey's end, as he had at the first day of his entrance into these torments. Consider Christian, what a length one hour would seem to thee, if thou wert to hold thy hand in fire and brimstone only during the space thereof, or to be stretched on a rack, or some other torture. We find by experience, that if a man be grievously sick, though he be laid upon a soft bed, yet one night seems a long time to him. He turns and tosses himself from side to side, counting every hour that strikes, which seems to him a whole day. And if a man should say to him, that he was to endure that pain but seven years together, he would go nigh to despair for grief. If therefore one night seems so long and tedious to him that lies on a soft bed, afflicted only with a little ague, what will the lying in fire and brimstone do, when he knows evidently, that there will never be an end thereof? O dear brother, the surfeit of continuance is loathsome even in things that are not evil of themselves. If thou shouldst be bound always to eat only one meat, although otherwise of itself it were not ungrateful, yet it would be displeasing to thee in the end. If thou shouldst be bound to sit still all thy life in one place, without moving, it would seem grievous and intolerable, although no man did torment thee in that place. What then will it be to lie eternally, in most extreme torments and inexplicable desolations? is it any way to be comprehended how they can be suffered? O blind judgment of man, that makes no more account of these calamities!

And yet I might here join another circumstance of these punishments which holy scripture itself omits not when it says, 'That all these torments shall be suffered in darkness,' a thing dreadful of itself to man's nature. For if the stoutest man found himself

Darkness in hell.

alone, destitute, naked, in some desolate place of darkness, and should hear the voices or cries of infernal spirits drawing towards him; he would be struck with fear, in regard of the circumstances of the place itself, although he felt no bodily hurt. For nothing is more terrible to man's imagination, than to conceive perils at hand, which the eye cannot discover, nor anything more full of extreme desolation, than to have our sight, and want forever the use and object thereof. This then is the most miserable and desolate state of such as are damned, that their insupportable and everlasting pains are sustained in darkness. Whereunto also may be added another circumstance recorded by the prophet, to complete all the rest, which is *Psalm xxxvi.* 'That the Lord shall laugh at them' in these their miseries: and affliction perhaps to be numbered amongst the greatest of all others. For as in this life, to be moaned by a man's friend in time of deversity, is exceeding great comfort, so to be derided and laughed at, especially by them who only may help and redress our miseries, is a great and intolerable increase of calamity.

The derision that shall be used towards the damned.

SECT. IV.—*Of a second sort of punishment upon the damned which is called pain of loss or damage, with the remedy to prevent them both.*

ALL this that hitherto has been said and laid before thy eyes, is but only part of a damned man's punishment, called by divines, *Pæna sensus*, the pain of sensation or feeling; that is to say, the sensible torments and afflictions which are laid upon the soul and body in that dreadful eternal fire, whereof we have spoken. But besides this there is another part of punishment termed in like manner by divines, **Pæna damni*, the pain of loss or damage, which oftentimes may be as great, or greater, than that of sensation, at least *appretiatively*, according to a phrase of Schoolmen, that is to say, in estimation and worth. As for example, if some great and rich nobleman were condemned to die, and to lose all that ever he had or may have in the world: there are two pains, first of sense, and the other of damage. The

* See St. Tho. 1. 2. qu. 87. art. 4 and 2. 2. qu. 79. art. 3. and 4. part q. 46. art.

The difference between pains of sense and damage.

pain of sense is that feeling and sensible pain which he suffers in his execution, according to the quality of his death; the pains of damage are the loss of wife and children, of brethren, friends, and kinsfolk, the loss of his goods and lands, and honours, with the ruin of his posterity, the cutting off of his own youth, the foregoing of his pleasures, and all delights of this world: all which put together, and represented to his mind, do oftentimes afflict him as much or more than his corporal pains, and he esteems them far more grievous to his mind, than the other to his body.

And if this fall out so in worldly losses and punishments, wherein whatsoever is lost, is but temporal, and mere trifles in respect of eternal losses; much more is it to be understood in the case of damned people, whereof we treat, whose greatest loss and punishment, is to have lost, for ever and ever, the fruition and sight of Almighty God, wherein divines do assign the everlasting beatitude and supreme felicity of mankind in the next life, according to the saying of that great and famous doctor St. Thomas; * *Visio Dei per essentiam, est tota essentia nostræ beatitudinis.* The sight of God, or to see God in his own nature or essence, in the whole substance and essence of our everlasting felicity in the life to come; which being so, we may imagine what a loss it is to be deprived of this sight. As if in this world a man should lose for ever all sight, feeling, and influence of the sun, his vigour, his sense, and life, and should be condemned to live in perpetual darkness and deadly cold; what a loss would it be! or how would he esteem it, if he were a sensible man? and yet it does not express the thousandth part of what it is to lose God, and the sight and fruition of his infinite and incomprehensible, and everlasting glory. For which respect, this loss is placed by the scripture in the first rank of all other losses, damages and miseries to be laid upon a damned man: *Isa. xxvi* 'In the land of the saints he hath done wicked things, 'and he shall not see the glory of the Lord.' And this loss contains all other losses and damages in it; such are the loss of eternal bliss and joy, of eternal glory, of eternal society with the angels and the like, which losses when a damned man considers, as he cannot but consider them perpetual.

*St Thom. part 1. q. 1, art. 4. and q. 12. art. 1, q. 6. art. 3. &c.

ly, he is more grieved, as divines say, than at all other sensible torment that he abides.

And hence proceeds that great and general torment which is so often repeated in holy writ,* *The worm of conscience.* by the name of the worm of our conscience; so called, because as a worm lies eating and gnawing the wood wherein it abides, so will the remorse of our conscience lie within us gnawing and tormenting us for ever. And this worm or remorse will principally consist in bringing to our minds the means and causes of our present extreme calamities: to wit, our folly and negligence, whereby we lost the felicity which other men have got. And at every one of these considerations, this worm will sting with a remorse, which will reach even to the very *The thought of the damned.* bottom of our heart. As when it will lay before us all the occasions we had offered to avoid the misery wherein now we are fallen, and to gain the glory, which we have lost; how easy it had been to have done it; how nigh oftentimes we were resolving to do it: and yet how unfortunately we left that thought again. How many times we were foretold of this danger, and yet how little care and fear we had of the same. How vain these worldly trifles were, wherein we spent our time, and for which we lost heaven, and fell into these most intolerable miseries. How they are now exalted, whom we thought fools in the world, and how we are proved fools and derided, who thought ourselves wise. These things, I say, and a thousand more, being laid before us by our own conscience, will give us infinite grief and desolation, it being now too late to amend them. And this grief is called the worm or remorse of our conscience; which worm will force men to weep and howl more at that day, than any other torment, considering how negligently, foolishly, and vainly, they are come into those insupportable torments, and that now there is no more time, place, or leave to redress their errors.

Now is the time of weeping, wailing and everlasting lamentation for these men: and yet all in vain. Now they will begin to fret and rage, and marvel at themselves, saying, where was our wit? *The time of eternal weeping.*

*Matt. ix. Isaiah. lxvi. Eccl. vii. and Judith vi.

where was our understanding? where was our judgment, when we followed vanities and contemned the affairs of our salvation. This is the talk of sinners in hell says the scripture, *Sap. v.* What hath pride, or what hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow: we wearied out ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction: but the way of the Lord we have not known. 'This, I say must be the everlasting song of the damned and tormented conscience in hell. An eternal repentance without remedy. By which extremity, he will be brought to such despair, as the scripture also notes that he will turn into fury against himself, tear his own flesh, rend his own soul, if it were possible, and invite the fiends and furies to torment him more, for that he has so beastly behaved himself in this world, as not to provide in time for this principal affair, the only one, indeed, worthy to have been thought on. O if he could now have but another short life to lead in the world how would he pass it over! with what diligence, with what severity, but this will not be granted, neither is there any price or value to purchase it. Only we, dear brethren, that are yet alive, do enjoy this inestimable grace and treasure of time for our amendment, if we are so happy as to resolve to take advantage thereof. One of these days we shall be past it also, and shall not recover the same again, no, not one hour, if we would buy it with a thousand worlds, as no doubt but that the damned would do, if it lay in their power. Let us now then so use this benefit, that when we are past hence, we may have no need to wish ourselves here again.

The passing commodity of the present time. This is the only time wherein we may avoid all: now is the season when we may put ourselves out of danger of all these terrors, now, I say, if we resolve out of hand. For we know not what will become of us to-morrow. It may be, that to-morrow our hearts will be as hard and careless of these affairs, as they have been heretofore, and as Pharaoh's heart was after Moses's departure from him: Oh that he had resolved himself thoroughly while Moses was with him: how fortunate a creature had he been? if the rich glutton had taken the time when Lazarus lay at his door, how blessed a man he had made himself? he was foretold his misery as we are now, by Moses and other prophets according to what our Saviour does signify; but he

would not hear. Afterwards he fell into such admiration of his own folly, that he would needs have Lazarus sent from Abraham's bosom to his brethren in the world, to warn them of his error. But Abraham told him it was needless ; for that they would not have believed Lazarus in this case, but rather, perhaps have persecuted him as a liar and defamer of their honourable brother diseased, if he should have revealed unto them his torments. And so indeed would the wicked men of this world do now, if one should come and tell them that their parents or friends are damned in hell for such and such offences, as themselves are guilty of. What then can God devise to do for the saving of these men ? what way, what means, what order can he take, when neither warning, nor example of others, nor threats, nor exhortations, will do any good ? We know or may know, that leading the life we do, we cannot be saved. We know, and ought to know, that many before us have been damned for less offences. We know, and cannot choose but know, that we must shortly die and receive ourselves, as they received, living as they did, or worse. We see by what is laid down before, *Great negligence and oversight.* that the pains which do attend and expect the wicked, are intolerable, and yet eternal. We confess them most unfortunate and miserable, that for any pleasure or advantage of this world, are now fallen into them. What then should hinder us from breaking off quickly with all impediments, all bands and chains of this world, that hinder us from this true and zealous resolution ? why should we sleep one night in sin, seeing that night may chance to be our last, and so the everlasting cutting off all hope to come.

Resolve thyself therefore, dear brother, if thou art wise, and clear thy soul from these dangers, while God is willing to receive thy amendment, and moves thee thereunto by these means, as he did the rich man by Moses and his other prophets, while he was yet in his prosperity. Let his example be oftentimes before thy eyes, and consider it, and it will do thee good. God is a wonderful God, and to show his patience and infinite goodness, he invites us in this life, seeks us, and lays himself as it were, at our feet, to move us thereby to our own good ; to win us, to draw us, and to save us from perdition. But after this life, he alters his course of dealing; he turns *The conclusion.*

over the leaf and changes his style. From a lamb he becomes a lion to the wicked, and from a Saviour a just and severe punisher. What can be said or done by his divine majesty to move us? he that is forewarned, and sees his own danger before his face, and yet is not stirred up or made the more wary or fearful thereby, may well be pitied, but surely by no means can be helped, making himself incapable of all remedies that can be used.

The remedy for all. But here now some perhaps moved with God's holy spirit may chance to say, well, and what remedy for avoiding these miseries thus threatened to us that live in sin? I see my own peril, says one, I believe the menaces of God here set down, and my heart begins to tremble at them, because my conscience is witness

Faith and fear, two great steps to amendment. against me: but what remedy will you prescribe? whereunto I answer first, that these very two things by you mentioned, faith, and fear of God's judgments, are two great steps unto the true remedy; faith being the first foundation of all good motions; and fear the first part of the building that is to be laid thereon; for which cause fear is called also, *the beginning of wisdom*, and consequently also, the beginning of our conversion.

But yet these two only are not sufficient, for St. James says, even of the devils themselves, they believe and tremble, and yet will not be saved. Wherefore we must pass further unto those other virtues which divines require, together with faith and fear, to wit, hope and charity, and that other which does flow out of all these, and is the proper remedy, penance, and repentance for our former faults; with a firm resolution of true amendment for the time to come.

The excellency of repentance. This, I say, is the true remedy; this is the sovereign salve and medicine for all our sores and maladies in this kind. This is the only thing that can prevent all the aforesaid miseries and calamities, that can avert all perils of God's threats and menaces; that can pacify his wrath, and this the very victory in a certain manner gained by a sinner over God's justice and judgments; and finally, this is the antidote of hell fire itself. Far as on the one side divines do hold that God never did,* or never will, nor can, by his ordinary

*See St. Tho. 3 p. q. 86. art. 1 and 2. and qu. 7. art. 1. and 4. Sot. in 4, Sen. dist. 14. qu. 2. art. 5.

power at least, forgive any sinner that does not repent ; so on the other, do they also hold, that he never did, nor will, nor can in mercy, deny any sinner pardon, that truly returns unto him by due repentance. So that in this combat whensoever the repentance of an humble sinner does contend with God's justice, it overcomes, and has the victory.

Why then, dear brother, wilt thou not lay hands on this remedy while thou hast time? hear *Note attentively.* what St. Augustine says in this case : * ' The first ' step to our salvation is, not to sin ; but the second, is not ' to despair of pardon ; and he does everlastingly destroy ' himself that will not run to his merciful Judge by the remedy of penance.' And the same father in another place talking with one that was sore troubled with fear, and used these words of the prophet ; *Psalm cxxxviii.* ' Whither ' shall I fly from his face.' St. Augustine answers, † whither wilt thou fly, my brother, but to his mercy by repentance, whose omnipotency thou hast offended by sinning : for no man does well to fly from him, but unto him, that is to say from his severity to his goodness.

If this remedy again-t so great evils, and his assurance from so inexplicable calamities, were sought for, never so far off, and with never so great labour or charges : yet wisdom would persuade us to procure it ; but much more, if it be near us, facile and easy to be had. If a man condemned to die in this world a most cruel death, by all sorts of torments, being brought forth by the justice to be led towards his execution, should be told that he might easily escape, or procure a remedy for all, by such and such means : how glad would he be ? how willingly he would hearken ? how diligently would he attend to procure the means of obtaining his pardon ? how vigilant, how careful would he show himself ? he would neither eat nor drink, nor take rest, nor talk of any other matter, until he had obtained his security. And yet our case is more urgent than this of his ; for he was condemned but to temporal death, whereas a sinner is condemned to death everlasting, and is no less in the way towards his execution than the other, and may arrive much sooner, because he has no minute of time secure in this life : And how then are we so negligent and careless in so

With what care men seek to escape temporal death, but not eternal.

* Aug. in Sent. 200.

† Aug. hom..10. cap. 14.

great and important an affair? the mercy of Christ our Saviour, as it has foretold us the danger, so it has placed the remedy near us, and made it more facile, leaving it in our own choice, will, and power, to use the same, and receive the benefit thereof, as often as we shall have need and de-

*The easi-
ness of the
remedy
that deli-
vers from
hell.*

sire to do ourselves good thereby. For what is more easy, than for a man to mislike his own naughty life, and then to receive remission thereof by the power of Christ's Catholic Church? which of his infinite mercy he has left unto her, o this effect, and is open and ready for all; so that whatsoever she, by her priests and bishops, shall absolve and release on earth, upon their repentance, Christ does also absolve in heaven, according to his commission in the gospel: *John xx. 23.* Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them. Let us hear St. Augustine a little in this matter. Thus he concludes, after a long discourse in his commentaries upon St. John's gospel*.

‘ Christ therefore gave unto his Church the keys in St. Matthew's gospel, *Matt. xvi.* to bind and loose sins, in such sort; That whatsoever she should bind upon earth, should be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever she should loose upon earth, should be loosed also in heaven. That is to say, that whosoever will not believe that his sins may be forgiven him in Christ's Church, his sins shall not be forgiven, but whosoever does believe that they may be forgiven, and being within the lap of the said Church does turn himself from his sins; he by that faith and correction of the Church is healed: but he that believes not, that they are forgiven, is made worse by despair.’ So he.

And the same father in another part of his works, considering the folly and perversity of many sinners in this behalf, because they did not use the benefit of this excellent divine remedy whilst they had time; breaks forth as it were into admiration, and indignation against them, saying thus:† And is there any man so much his own enemy, who feeling himself entangled with the burden of his sins after baptism, will doubt to change his life, while time serves him? For by his persevering in sin, he heaps to himself vengeance in the day of tribulation of God's just judg-

* Aug. tract. 22. in Joan. & lib. de util. pœn. cap. 3 † Aug. hom. 56. c. 10.

ments, as the apostle testifies : *Rom. ii.* and that he yet lives, it is the patience of Almighty God, endeavouring to bring him to penance. Wherefore is there any man, who being, as before I have said, entangled with the deadly chains of sins, will refuse or delay, or doubt to fly unto the keys of the Catholic Church, thereby to be absolved upon earth to the end he may be free in heaven? or will any man dare promise unto himself salvation after this life, only because he is a Christian? Thus reasons St. Augustine, and exhorts men every where to esteem highly, and to use to their eternal welfare, this singular benefit of the Church's absolution, left by our Saviour under the name of Keys: a spiritual authority to bind and loose sins, and consequently also to open or shut heaven's gates to such as make recourse unto her.

St. Augustine's exhortation to use the Church's benefit of absolution.

And all other ancient fathers do concur in this point, with St. Augustine. That blessed bishop and martyr St. Cyprian, writing to Cornelius bishop of Rome at that time, acknowledges this singular privilege of Catholic Christians that live within the unity of the church, to whom he says, that when they die calling upon the church with sorrow and prayers, the help of salutary hope is not denied: which help he expounds to be this most comfortable law of Christ, for so he calls it, that they may be absolved in heaven of those sins, whereof they were first absolved by the church upon earth.

St. Cyprian's esteem of this benefit.

St. Hierom also, extols wonderfully the greatness of this benefit and privilege, which we receive by the hands of priests in the Catholic Church, in absolving us from our sins, of whom he says; they having the keys of the kingdom of heaven in their hands, do in a certain sort, by binding and loosing sins, judge before the day of judgment. Or as the other great saint, and most ancient father, St. Hillary's words are: whose judgment upon earth, to wit, of priests, becomes a precedent authority in heaven; so that whatsoever sins are bound or loosed by them on earth, do obtain a decree of the same nature in heaven. What thing can be spoken more effectually than this.

But yet above all other fathers, St. Chrysostom exaggerates in a certain sort, this matter, and the singular importance thereof; as also condemns the madness of worldly negligent men and sinners, in not making their profit of this

heavenly treasure, which Christ has left them for the forgiveness of sins in this life, and thereby the avoiding of hell fire in the next, Hear his words: 'Earthly princes,' says he, 'have power indeed to bind, but it is only our bodies; but the power of priests, whereof I have spoken, touches also our very souls: yea, it reaches even to heaven itself

St Chrysostom's discourse of priests' authority in absolving sin.

'in such sort, that whatsoever priests determine here beneath, that God ratifies above, confirming the sentence of his servants on earth. And what will you say then of this, but that all heavenly power is granted unto priests also in this world: Whose sins soever you retain,' says Christ, *John xx.* 'they are retained.' What

greater authority can there be imagined than this? 'God the father has given all power to the Son, and I see that God the Son has given all that power again to priests upon earth.' Thus St. Chrysostom, exhorting men exceedingly to make great account of this rare benefit, and thereby to seek to prevent the punishments of the life to come.

And now dear brother, wilt thou not rather join thyself with these holy fathers St. Cyprian, St. Hillary, St. Hierom, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and others their equals, for all are of one doctrine, than to adventure thy soul with the ignorance, and negligence of careless people? thou

Two conditions required for the benefit of delivery from our sins.

seest the infinite benefit here offered thee: suppose it were offered to one that is already in hell fire? how would he hearken unto it? thou seest how easy the matter is made unto thy hands; for I see only two conditions required by these fathers for thee to enjoy the benefit, and to be set free from thy sins, and consequently also from

the danger of all those punishments before-mentioned due unto sin. The one condition is, that thou be within the lap of the Catholic Church, for that St. Augustine and St. Cyprian before cited expressly require. The other, that the benefit be taken during this life: for after, it is too late; and because we have spoken sufficiently before out of St. Augustine of the second condition, I will now only tell you concerning the first condition, that not only St. Augustine, but all other fathers in like manner do every where so greatly inculcate this condition, *of being a member of the Catholic Church*, that, without this, no remission of sins

can ever be had or hoped for at all. For that except we be within the union and communion of this church, we can receive no benefit at all, either by sacraments, sacrifices, prayers, merits, alms-deeds, or whatsoever other benefits besides, which we have also showed and declared* elsewhere more at large, yea, although we should suffer death and martyrdom itself for the name and profession of the Christian religion, yet we should not be saved. For the common sentence of the fathers and doctors of Christ's Catholic Church is, and has always been firmly held by all and every one: *that out of the Church there is no salvation.*

Wherefore, dear Christian, to conclude this whole matter, if God move thy heart to amend thy life, and to get thyself out of the dangerous state of sin wherein thou standest, and this by the means here set down, for there are no other means, the first point which thou hast to do, is to make thyself capable of this benefit according to the meaning of those holy fathers before-mentioned, and then having received that freedom from the burden of sin, together with the inward consolation of God's holy spirit, which true repentant people are want to receive in the church, thou mayest, with more comfortable hope and consolation, attend unto the exercise of good works, which holy scripture calls, *Luke iii. the worthy fruits of true repentance*: and so thou shalt come, not only to avoid at least the danger of those infernal fires before-mentioned, but to gain also to thyself that rich and precious crown of justice, which St. Paul, arrived now at his death, did assure, as well to himself, as to all others that follow his example. Of which crown, and of the glory and riches thereunto belonging, we are now to treat more particularly in the following chapter.

* In the Examin. of Fox's Calendar in præfat.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the most honorable, excellent, and magnificent rewards and payments, —ordained for such as truly serve God, and do employ their time in performance of his most holy Commandments.

SECT. I. *That God is a most liberal rewarder.*

THE motives, reasons, and considerations laid down before in the precedent chapters, might well suffice to stir up the heart of any reasonable Christian, to take in hand this resolution whereof we at present treat, and whereunto I so much covet to persuade thee, gentle reader, for thy own good and profit. But because all hearts are not of one constitution in this respect, nor all wills drawn and moved with the same means and inducements : I propose to adjoin here a consideration of advantage, whereunto commonly each man is prone by nature ; and which consequently may, perhaps, be of greater force to work that effect which we desire, than any thing else that hitherto has been said. I

*God the
best pay-
master.*

intend therefore in this place, to treat of the benefits which are reaped by the service of Almighty God ; of the gain procured thereby, and of the most liberal reward, which God renders to his servants above all other masters that can be served. And though the just fear of being punished, if we serve him not, might be sufficient to drive us to this resolution ; and the infinite benefits already received, might induce us the same out of gratitude, of both which somewhat has been said before : yet if these motives were not sufficient, surely the advantages that accrue to us from serving God, ought forcibly to persuade us to this resolution. For as God in all other things is a majestical God, full of bounty, liberality, and magnificence ; so he is in this point above all others, in such sort, that although whatsoever we do, or can do in his service, is truly but a debt and tribute due unto him, and for that reason, of itself deserves nothing : yet out of this munificent bounty, he lets pass no part of our service unrewarded ; no, not so much as a cup of cold water bestowed in his name.*

God commanded Abraham to sacrifice unto him his only son Isaac, whom he so dearly loved : but when he was

* Matt. 10. & Mark 9.

ready to do the same, God said unto him, *Gen. xxii.* ‘ Lay ‘ not thy hand upon the boy, &c.’ It is enough for me that I see thy obedience. And for that thou hast not refused to obey me; ‘ By my ownself have I sworn,’ saith the Lord: ‘ because thou hast done this thing, I will bless thee, ‘ and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and ‘ as the sand that is by the sea shore: and in thy seed ‘ shall all the nations of the earth be blest, because thou ‘ hast obeyed my voice.’ Was not this, think you, a most liberal pay for so little pains; king David, 2 *Reg. vii.* discoursing with himself on a certain time, how his own palace being richly built of cedar timber, the ark of his Lord and Maker was lodged only under a poor tent, resolved with himself to erect a house and temple for the same. Which thought only, God took in such good part, that he sent Nathan the prophet unto him presently, to refuse the thing, but yet to tell him, that because that he had determined such a matter, God would build a house, or rather a kingdom to him and his posterity, which should last for ever, and from which he would never take away his mercy, what sins or offences soever they committed. Which liberal promise we see now fulfilled in the Church of Christ, descended originally from that noble family. Why should I labour to heap up together more examples to this effect? Christ himself, *Matthew xx.* gives a general note hereof, when he calls the workmen, and pays to each man his wages so duly; as also when he says of himself, *Apoc. xxii.* ‘ Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.’ By which place it is evident, that God suffers no labour in his service to be lost or unpaid. And although, as hereafter* shall be showed more amply, he pays also, and that abundantly, in this present life, yet, as by these two texts appears, he defers his chief pay until his coming in the end of the day: that is, after this life, in the resurrection of the just, as himself says in another place.

SECT. II *Of the reward and payment in general.*

CONCERNING the payment reserved for God’s servants in the life to come, we are now to consider what manner of thing it is, and whether it be worth so much labour and

* In the second part and second chapter of this book.

pains, as the service of God in this world requires. And first of all, if we believe the holy scripture, calling it a *kingdom, a heavenly kingdom; an eternal kingdom, a most blessed kingdom*; we must needs confess it to be a marvellous and great reward: seeing that in this world there can hardly be found so bountiful a monarch, as will bestow a kingdom upon his servant in recompence of his service. And if he would, and were able to perform the same, yet would it be neither a heavenly, nor eternal, nor blessed kingdom, such as this which God has promised unto his servants. Secondly, if we credit that which St. Paul says of this reward. *1 Cor. ii.* that neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man conceived how great it is; then we must have a greater opinion of it: because we have seen many wonderful things in our days; we have heard more wonderful; we may conceive most wonderful and almost infinite. How then shall we come to understand the greatness, and value of this reward; surely no tongue created, either of men or angels, can express the same! no imagination conceive, no understanding comprehend it! Christ himself has said, *Apoc. ii.* no man knows it but he that enjoys it. And therefore he calls it *hidden manna* in the same place. Notwithstanding, as it is reported of a learned geometrician, who finding the length of Hercules's foot upon the hill Olympus, drew out his whole body by the proportion of that one part: so we by some things set down in holy scripture, and some other circumstances agreeing thereunto, may frame a conjecture of the matter, though it be far unequal and inferior to the thing itself.

I have before declared how this reward in holy writ is called a *heavenly, everlasting and most blessed kingdom*. By which words is signified, that all who are found worthy of this reward will be kings, and most happy kings. To like effect it is called in other places, *a crown of glory, a throne of majesty, a paradise or place of pleasure, a life everlasting*. St. John the evangelist being, by a special privilege, let into some knowledge and feeling thereof, as well for his own comfort, as for ours, takes in hand to describe it, *Apoc. xxi. & xxii.* by comparison of a city: affirming, that the whole body thereof was of pure gold, environed with a great and high wall of the precious stone called Jasper. This wall had also twelve foundations, made of twelve

*The description
of paradise used
by St.
John.*

distinct precious stones, which he there names ; also twelve gates, made of twelve rich stones called Margarites, and every gate was an entire Margarite. The streets of the city were paved with gold, interlaid also with pearls and precious stones. The light of the city was the clearness and splendour of Christ himself, sitting in the midst thereof ; from whose sea proceeded a river of water as clear as chrystal, to refresh the city ; and on both sides of the banks there grew the tree of life, giving out continual and perpetual fruit. There was no night in that city, nor any defiled thing entered thereinto, but they who are within shall reign, says he, for ever and ever.

By this description of the most rich and precious things that this world has, St. John would give us to understand, the infinite value, glory, and majesty, of this felicity prepared for us in heaven : though as I have noted before, it being the princely inheritance of our Saviour Christ, the kingdom of his Father, the eternal habitation of the Holy Trinity, prepared before all worlds to set out the glory, and to express the power of him that has no end or measure, either in power or glory : we may very well think with St. Paul, that neither tongue can declare it, nor heart imagine it. When God takes upon him to do a thing for the declaration of his power, wisdom, and eternal majesty ; imagine you what a thing it will be ! It pleased him to make certain creatures to serve him in his presence, and to be witnesses of his glory ; and thereupon with a word he created the angels, both for number and perfection of nature so strange and wonderful, that the thought thereof astonishes our understanding. As for their number, they were almost infinite, passing the number of all the creatures of this inferior world, as divers learned men,* and some ancient fathers are of opinion : although Daniel, according to the custom of holy writ, does put a certain number for an uncertain, when he says of angels : *Dan. vii.* Thousand of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him. And as for the perfection of their nature, it is such, being celestial spirits, that they far surpass all inferior creatures in natural knowledge, power, beauty, and all other excellencies, which in one angel

The magnificence of God expressed diversly.

* See St. Tho. part I. q. 50 art. 3 & Dionys. cælesti. Hier.. c. 14.

are more as to the perfection of nature, than in all other creatures of the world put together. What an infinite majesty then does this argue in the Creator.

After this, when many of these angels were fallen, it pleased Almighty God to frame another creature, far inferior in nature to these, to fill up the places of such as were fallen; and thereupon created man of a piece of clay, appointed him to live in this world, as a place of entertainment and trial for a time; which place, God notwithstanding, determined afterwards to destroy again. But yet in creating this transitory world (which is but a base cottage in regard of his own eternal habitation) consider, good reader, what power, magnificence, and majesty he has showed. What heavens, and how wonderful has he created? what infinite stars and other lights has he devised, what elements has he framed? and how marvellously has he compacted them together? the seas tossing and tumbling without rest, and replenished with infinite sorts of fish, the rivers running incessantly through the earth, like veins in a man's body, and yet never empty, nor overflowing the same: the earth itself so furnished with a variety of creatures, that the hundredth part thereof is not used nor employed by man, but only remains to show the full hand, and strong arm of the Creator. And all this, as I said, was done in an instant, with one word only, and that for the use of a small time in respect of the other future life, which is to last for all eternity. What then may we imagine that the habitation prepared for that eternity will be? if the cottage of his meanest servant, made only for a time, to bear off, as it were, a shower of rain, be so princely, so rich, so majestic, as we see this world is; what must we think that the king's palace itself is, appointed for all eternity, for himself and his friends to reign together? we must needs think it to be as great, as the power and wisdom of the maker could reach to perform, and that is, incomparably, and above all measure infinite.

The great king Assucrus, who reigned in Asia over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces; to discover his power and riches unto his subjects, made a feast, as the scripture says, *Hest.* i. in his great city of Susan, for all the princes, states, and potentates of his dominions, for a hundred and foreshore days together. Isaiah the prophet says, *Isa.* xxv. that our God, and Lord of hosts, will at the last day make

a solemn banquet to all his people upon the hill and mount of heaven. And this banquet will be so solemn, that the very Son of God himself, chief Lord of the feast, will serve in the same, as by his own words he promises. What manner of banquet then will this be? how magnificent and majestic? especially seeing it is not only to last a hundred and fourscore days, as that of Assuerus did, but more than a hundred and fourscore millions of ages; not served by men as Assuerus's feast was, but by angels, and the very Son of God himself; not to open the power and riches of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, but even of Almighty God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, whose power and riches are without end, and greater than all his creatures put together can conceive. How glorious a banquet will this be? how triumphant the joy of this festival day? how incomprehensible a bliss to be a partaker thereof? O most miserable and foolish children of Adam, that are born to so rare and singular a dignity, and yet cannot be brought to consider, love, or esteem the same.

Many other things there are, whereby to conjecture the exceeding greatness of this reward and felicity; as for example, to consider, that if God has given so many pleasures, and comfortable gifts in this life, which notwithstanding is a place of banishment, a habitation of sinners, a vale of misery, and appointed only for a time of repenting, weeping, mourning, and bewailing; what will he do in the life to come, to the just, to his friends, in the time of joy and marriage of his soul! This was a most forcible consideration with St. Augustine, who in the secret speech of his soul with God, said thus: * 'O my Lord, if thou for this
' vile body of ours, has given us so great and innumerable
' benefits, from the firmament, from the air, from the earth,
' from the sea, by light, by darkness, by heat, by shadow,
' by dews, by showers, by winds, by rain, by birds, by fish,
' by beasts, by trees, by multitude of herbs, and variety of
' plants, and by the ministry of all thy creatures: O sweet
' Lord, what manner of things, how great, how good and,
how innumerable are those which thou hast prepared for
' us in our heavenly country, where we shall see thee face
' to face? if thou do such great things for us in our prison,
' what wilt thou give us in our palace; if thou givest so

* Aug. soli. c. 21,

‘ many things in this world, both to good and evil men,
 ‘ what hast thou laid up for good men in the world to come?
 ‘ if both thy enemies and friends are so well provided for
 ‘ in this life, what will thy friends receive in the life to
 ‘ come? if there be so great solaces in these days of tears,
 ‘ what joy will there be in that day of the marriage? if our
 ‘ jail and prison contain so great matters, what will our
 ‘ country and kingdom do? O my Lord and God, thou
 ‘ art a great God, and great is the multitude of thy magni-
 ‘ ficence and sweetness. And as there is no end of thy
 ‘ greatness nor number of thy mercies, nor depth of thy
 ‘ wisdom, nor measure of thy benignity, so is there neither
 ‘ end, number, depth, length, greatness, or measure of thy
 ‘ rewards to them that love thee and do fight for thee.’
 Hitherto St. Augustine.

Another method to conceive some part of the reward in the life to come, is, to remember and weigh the manifold promises of Almighty God, to honour and glorify all those that shall love and serve him. 1 *Reg.* ii. ‘ Whosoever shall glorify me, (says he) him will I glorify.’ And the prophet David complains as it were, joyfully, *Psalms* cxxxviii. that God’s friends were too much honoured by him. Which he might with much more cause have said, if he had lived in the New Testament, and had heard that promise of Christ, of which I spoke before, *Luke* xii. that his servants should sit down and banquet, and that himself would serve and minister unto them in the kingdom of his father. What understanding can conceive how great this honour can be? but yet in some part it may be guessed, by saying, ‘ That they shall sit down with him;’ and St. Paul adds, shall be judges not only of men but also of angels. It may also be conjectured by the exceeding great honour which he at certain times has done to his servants even in this life, wherein notwithstanding they are placed, to be despised, and not be honoured.

How great honour was that, think you, which he did to Abraham in the sight of so many kings and princes of the earth: *Gen.* xii. xiv. & xxii. as, of Pharaoh, Abimelech, Melchisedech, and others? how great honour was that he did to Moses in the face of Pharaoh, *Exod.* v. vi. vii. & viii. and of all his court, by the wonderful signs that he wrought by him? what excessive honour was that he did to holy Joshua, *Jos.* x. when in the sight of all his army, he stopt

the sun and moon in the midst of the firmament, at Joshua's appointment, obeying therein, as the scripture says, the voice of a man? what honour was that he did to Isaiah in the presence and sight of king Ezekias, *Isa.* xxxviii. when he made the sun to go back ten degrees in the heavens: what honour was that he did to Elias in the sight of wicked Achab, *3 Reg.* xvii. when he yielded the heavens into his hands, and bid him to say, that neither rain nor dew should fall upon the ground for seven years, but only by the words of his mouth? what honour was that he did to Eliseus in the sight of Naaman the noble Syrian, *4 Reg.* xv. whom he cured of the leprosy with which he was infected, whose bones also after his death, raised up the dead to life? Finally, not to alledge more examples, what singular honour was that he did to all the Apostles of his Son, *Acts* v. that as many as ever they laid their hands upon were healed from all infirmities, as St. Luke affirms? nay, which is yet more, *Acts* xix. the very girdles and napkins of St. Paul had the same effect; and yet more than that also, *Acts* v. as many as came within the shadow of St. Peter were healed from their diseases. Is not this marvellous honour even in this life? was there ever monarch, prince, or potentate of the world, that could vaunt of such point of honour? and if Christ did this to his servants even in this world, whereof notwithstanding he says, his kingdom was not; what honour can we think he has reserved for the life to come, where his kingdom will be all fulness, and where all his servants will be crowned, as eternal kings with him.

Lastly for some further declaration of this matter, and for expressing the incomparable excellency of heavenly bliss; some divines use a consideration of three different places, whereunto man by his creation is ordained, although in all points it is not necessary to hold the same just proportion. The first of which places, is our mother's womb; the second this present world; the third, *Cælum Empyreum*, which is the place of bliss in the life to come. Now in these three places, say the learned, we must hold some like proportion between the third and second place, as we see sensibly to be observed between the second and first. So that in what proportion the second does differ from the first; in like measure must the third be different from the second, or rather much more; for that eternal and heavenly things do exceed all comparison of transitory things among

themselves. By this proportion then we must say, that as far as the world does surpass the womb of one private woman; so much in all beauty, delights, and majesty, does the place of heavenly bliss surpass all this whole world with the ornaments thereof. And as much as a man living in the world, does exceed a child in his mother's womb, for strength of body, beauty, wit, understanding, learning, and knowledge; so much and far more does a saint in heaven surpass all men in this world, in all these excellencies, and infinite more besides. Think then how great horror a man of perfect age would conceive to return into his mother's womb again; and certainly as much and far greater would a glorified soul have to come back from that eternal bliss into this vale of misery. The nine months also of life in the mother's womb, are not so little in respect of any man's age in the world, as is the longest life upon earth, in respect of everlasting life in heaven. Nor the blindness, ignorance, and other miseries of the child in the mother's womb, are any way to be compared to the blindness, darkness, folly, and other calamities of this life; in respect of the clear light, most excellent knowledge, divine understanding, and other singular prerogatives of the saints in heaven. So that by all these reasons laid together, there may a general conjecture be framed of the most infinite and incomprehensible excellency of this reward whereof we treat.

SECT. III. *Of the two parts of felicity in Heaven; to wit, that of the soul, and that of the body.*

First of the body. BUT to consider the same thing somewhat more in particular; it is to be noted that this reward or glory of heaven will comprehend in itself two parts or members; the one called essential, belonging to the soul, the other termed accidental belonging to the body. The essential part consists in the vision or sight of God, as before you have heard, and afterwards shall be shewed again. The accidental consist in the change and glorification of our flesh after the general Resurrection, whereby this corruptible body of ours will put on incorruption, as St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xv. and mortal become immortal. All this flesh, I say of ours, that now is so cumbersome, and grieves the mind, that now is invested with so many inconveniences, subject to so many mutations,

vexed with so many diseases, defiled with so many corruptions, replenished with so many miseries and calamities will then be made glorious and most perfect, to last for ever without change or mutation, and to reign with the soul everlastingly. And for this purpose, as* divines do prove, the same will be endowed with certain excellent qualities and gifts from God, which St. Anselm, whom in this matter I will follow, does reckon to be seven; to wit, beauty, agility, fortitude, penetrability, health, pleasure and perpetuity. All which excellencies either are wanting in the damned bodies, or else their contraries are found therein, *Seven privileges of the glorified bodies.*

And first of all concerning the privilege and high excellency of beauty, how singular, it will be in the glorified bodies, our Saviour himself in some part declares, when he says, *Mat. xiii.* ‘Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.’ A marvellous speech, and in human sense almost incredible, that our putrified bodies being raised, should shine and become as clear as the sun; whereas on the contrary, the bodies of the damned will be as black, and ugly as filth itself. The second prerogative assigned to the bodies of the just, is agility, or velocity whereby their flesh is delivered from all lumpish heaviness, wherewith it was incumbered in this life, and made as light as the angels themselves, which are spirits, and pass from place to place with infinite swiftness; as also descend and ascend of themselves, against the nature of corruptible bodies: whereas in the mean time, the damned bodies will be bound both hand and foot, not able once to move, as the scripture expressly notes, *Mat. xxii.*

The third gift and quality is supernatural strength, wherewith the glorified body will so abound, as Anselm says, that it will be able to move the whole earth; and on the contrary, the damned body will be so weak and impotent, that it will not be able to remove the very worms from its own face and eyes. The fourth quality is penetrability, or free power of passage, whereby the glorified body will be enabled to pierce and penetrate any other bodies whatsoever; as walls, doors, the earth or firmament, without any resistance, quite contrary to the nature of a corruptible body. So we see that Christ’s Body glorified, after his resurrection, entered the house where his Disci-

* See St. Th, 3, par. q. 81 in suppl. Anselmus I. de simil. c. 48. & 49

ples were, the doors being shut, and penetrated also the heavens at his ascension. The fifth quality, is most absolute health, whereby the glorified body will be delivered from all diseases, and pains of this life, and from all troubles and incumbrances belonging to the same ; as are, eating, drinking, sleeping, and other like : and will be set in a most perfect and flourishing state of health and freedom, never decayable again. Whereas the damned bodies on the contrary, will be filled and wearied with innumerable pains and torments, which no tongue of man is able to express.

The sixth perfection is delight and pleasure, wherewith the glorified body, above all measure, will be replenished, all its senses finding their peculiar and proper objects in much more excellency than ever they could in this world. Every part, sense, member, and joint, will be filled with exceeding delectation and pleasure ; as in the damned, each part and sense will be afflicted and tormented. I will alledge St. Anselm's words* because they express unto us this matter most lively. ' All the whole glorified body, ' says he, will be filled with abundance of all kind of comfort ; the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth, the hands, ' the throat, the lungs, the heart, the stomach, the back, ' the bones, the marrow, and the very entrails themselves, ' and every part thereof will be replenished with such unspeakable sweetness and pleasure, that truly it may be ' said, that the whole man is made to drink of the river of ' God's divine delights, and made drunk with the abundance ' of God's house.' On the contrary, the damned body will be tormented in all its parts and members ; each suffering in the same proportion in which they were subservient to the soul in offending God.

The seventh and last excellency of a glorious body, is called perpetuity or security of life, whereby it is made assured never to die, or ever alter from its felicity ; according to the saying of holy scripture ; *Sap. v.* ' The just ' shall live for ever.' And this is one of the chief prerogatives and most excellent dignities of a glorified body, whereby all care, doubt, and fear, all danger of hurt and annoyance is taken away. For if all the world should fall together upon such a body, it could not hurt nor harm it any thing at all ; whereas the damned body lies always dying

* Ansel. cap. 17 ubi supra.

and is subject to the grief of every blow and torment laid upon it, and must remain so for all eternity.

These seven most excellent qualities, prerogatives, dignities, and pre-eminences will adorn and beautify the bodies of the just in the life to come. And although this universal happiness is but accidental, as I have said, and nothing if compared to the essential felicity of our soul: yet is it a matter of no small importance, as you see, but such, that if any body in this life had but the least part thereof, we should esteem him most happy. And to obtain so much in this world, most men would use all their endeavours; whereas to get them altogether in the life to come, no man almost will move his finger.

But now to leave this, and come to the most excellent and essential point of this felicity, that is, to the part which pertains to the soul; it is to be understood, that although there are many things that concur to this felicity for the accomplishment and perfection of full happiness: yet the fountain of all is but one only thing, called by divines *Visio Dei beatifica*: the sight or vision of God that makes us happy. 'This only sight of God is our entire happiness, says St. Augustine:* which Christ also affirms, when he says to his Father, *Joan. xvii.* 'This is life everlasting, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' St. Paul also puts our felicity, *1 Cor. xiii.* In 'seeing God face to face.' And St. John, 'in seeing God as he is.' And the reason of all this, is, that all the pleasures and delights of this world, wherein mortal men do solace themselves, being nothing else but little pieces and crumbs of God's incomprehensible felicity: the same are contained much more perfectly and excellently in God himself, from whom they are derived, than they are in their own natures imparted unto man; as all the perfections of God's creatures are more fully in him than they are in them. Whence it follows, that whosoever is admitted to the vision and presence of almighty God, the Creator and fountain of all delights; will there find all the goodness and perfections of worldly things united together, and presented unto him at once. So that whatsoever

*The second
part of
felicity
called
essential.
pertaining
to the soul.*

*How the
vision of
God will
make man
happy.*

* Aug. 1. de Trin. c. 13.

may delight either body or soul, there he will enjoy it altogether, and which the presence thereof will be ravished in all parts both in mind and body, in such sort, that he will not be able to imagine, think, or wish for any joy whatsoever, but there will find the same in its full perfection. There he will find all knowledge, all wisdom, all beauty, all riches, all nobility, all pleasure, and whatsoever besides may deserve either love or admiration, or causes any pleasure or satisfaction unto man.

*God to
the saved
shall be
all in all.*

All the powers of our mind will be filled with this sight, presence, and fruition of God: all the senses of our body will be satisfied and fully contented with the same. God will be the universal felicity of all saints; containing in himself alone all particular felicities without end, number or measure. He will be light to our eyes, music to our ears, honey to our mouths, most sweet and pleasant balm to our smell. He will be knowledge to our understanding, content to our will, continuation of eternity to our memory. In him we shall enjoy all the variety of things that delight us here; all the beauty of creatures that allures us here: all the pleasures and joys that content us here. 'In this vision of God, as Hugo says,* we shall know, we shall love, we shall rejoice, we shall praise. We shall know the very secrets and judgments of God, which are a depth without bottom; as also the causes, natures, beginnings, offsprings, and ends of all creatures. We shall love incomparably, both God, for the infinite causes of love that we see in him, and our brethren, and companions, as much as ourselves, for that we shall see them as much loved by God as ourselves, and for the same cause for which we are loved: whence ensues, that our joy will be without measure; both because we shall have a particular joy for every thing we love in God, which things are infinite: and also for that we shall rejoice at the felicity of every one of our brethren as much as our own: and by that means we shall have as many distinct felicities, as we shall have distinct companions in our felicity: who being without number, it is no marvel that Christ said, Go into the joy of thy Lord, and not, let thy Lord's joy enter into thee: because no created heart can receive

*The great-
ness of joy
in heaven.*

* Hugh. 1. 4, de anima, c, 15.

‘ the fulness and greatness of this joy. And hereof finally
 ‘ it does ensue, that we shall praise God without end or
 ‘ weariness, with all our heart, with all our strength, with
 ‘ all our powers, with all our parts, according to what
 ‘ the scripture says : happy are they that live in thy house,
 ‘ O Lord, for they will praise thee eternally without end.’
 Hitherto this learned doctor.

Of this most blessed vision, sight, possession, and fruition of Almighty God, whereunto in heaven the elect are admitted, the learned father St. Augustine writes thus :
 ‘ Our Saviour in the gospel said unto his disciples ; Happy are the clean of heart, for they shall
 ‘ see God. By which words we are led to understand, that there is a sight or vision of God,
 ‘ which is sufficient of itself to beautify men, and
 ‘ make them happy. A vision which neither eye
 ‘ has seen in this world, nor ear has heard, nor heart conceived. A vision dear brethren, that passes all the beauty of earthly things ; of gold, of silver, of words, of fields,
 ‘ of sea, of air, of sun, of moon, of stars, of angels : because
 ‘ all these things have their beauty from thence. We shall
 ‘ see him face to face, says his apostle, and we shall know
 ‘ him as we are known. That is, we shall know the power of the Father, we shall know the wisdom of the Son,
 ‘ we shall know the goodness of the Holy Ghost, we shall
 ‘ know the indivisible nature of the Blessed Trinity. And
 ‘ this very seeing of the face of God, is the joy of angels,
 ‘ and of all other saints and celestial spirits in heaven. This
 ‘ is the reward of life everlasting, this is the glory of all
 ‘ blessed Cherubims ; their everlasting pleasure ; their
 ‘ crown of honour ; their term of felicity ; their rich repose, their beautiful quietness ; their inward and outward
 ‘ consolation ; their divine paradise : their heavenly Jerusalem, their happiness of life ; their fulness of bliss ; their
 ‘ eternal triumph ; their precious peace of God, which
 ‘ passes all understanding. The sight of God is the full
 ‘ beatitude, the total glorification of men and angels ; to
 ‘ see and behold him, I say, that made both heaven and
 ‘ earth ; to see and behold thee dear brother, that made
 ‘ thee, that glorified thee. For in seeing him, thou wilt
 ‘ know him ; in knowing him, thou wilt love him ; in loving him, thou wilt possess him ; in possessing him, thou
 ‘ wilt praise him ; and in praising him, thou wilt spend thy

*The speech
 of St. Augustine
 touching
 the vision
 of God.*

whole eternity. For he is the inheritance of his people, he is the possession of their felicity, he is the reward of their expectation. I am thy protector and thy reward, said he to Abraham: *Gen. xv.* O Lord thou art great, and therefore no marvel, if thou be a great reward. The sight of thee therefore is all our reward, all our joy and felicity that we expect; seeing thou hast said, *John xvii.* that 'This is life everlasting; that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Thus uttered St. Augustine his feeling in these affairs.

SECT. IV.—*Of circumstances increasing the joys of Heaven*

AND now having thus declared the two general parts of the heavenly felicity, the one appertaining to our soul, the other to our body: it is not hard to esteem what excess of joy, both of them, joined together, will work in us at the most happy day of our glorification. Which the aforesaid holy St. Augustine conceived and expressed in the most zealous and affecting words; 'O joy above all joys, and without which there is no joy, when shall I enjoy thee, to see my God that dwells in thee? O everlasting kingdom! O kingdom of all eternity! O light without end! O peace of God that passes all understanding! wherein the souls of saints do rest with thee, O Lord; and everlasting joy is upon their heads, and they do possess joy and exultation, and all pain and sorrow is fled from them. O how glorious a kingdom is thine, O Lord, wherein all saints reign with thee, adorned with light, as with precious apparel, and have crowns of precious stones upon their heads! O kingdom of everlasting bliss, where thou art present, O Lord, the hope of all saints, and the diadem of their everlasting glory, replenishing them with joy on every side by thy blessed sight! O Lord, in this kingdom of thine, there is infinite joy and mirth without sadness; health without sorrow; life without labour; light without darkness; felicity without abatement; all goodness without evil. Here youth flourishes that never grows old; life that knows no end; beauty that never fades: love that never cools: health that never diminishes; joy that never ceases. Here sor-

St. Augustine's apprehension of the joys of Heaven.

‘row is never felt, complaint is never heard matter of sadness is never seen, nor evil success is never feared. For that they possess thee, O Lord, who art the perfection and crown of their felicity.’ Hitherto blessed St. Augustine.

And now, Christian brother, if we that live in these days, and read these things, would enter seriously into these considerations, as this holy man, and others did, no doubt, but we should be more inflamed with the love of this heavenly felicity prepared for us, than we are; and consequently should strive more to gain it, than, alas, we do. And to he end thou mayest conceive some more feeling in this matter, consider but a little with me, what a joyful day will that be at thy house, when having lived in the fear of God, and finished in his service the end of thy peregrination, thou shalt come, by the means of death, to pass from misery and labour, to the life of immortality; and in that passage when other men begin to fear, thou shalt lift up thy head in hope, according to thy Saviour’s promise: for that the time of thy salvation comes on. Tell me I say, what a day of joy will that be to thee, when thy soul stepping forth of prison, and conducted by the angels to the tabernacle of heaven, will be received there with the honourable companions and troops of that place? with all those hierarchies of blessed spirits that are mentioned in scripture:* as principalities, powers, virtues, dominations, thrones, angels, arch-angels, cherubims, and seraphims, with the holy apostles and disciples of Christ; with patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, virgins, innocents, confessors, holy bishops, priests, and other saints of God? all, who as they did rejoice at thy conversion from sin, so will they triumph now at thy coronation and glorification. What joy and jubilee will thy soul receive at that day, dear brother, when she shall be presented by her good angel, in the presence of all the princely states, before the majesty of the blessed trinity, with recital and declaration of all thy good works done and labours suffered, for the love and service of Almighty God; when, I say, those blessed spirits will lay down in that honourable consistory all thy virtuous acts, with their particularities: all thy alms-deeds, all thy prayers, all thy fastings, all thy patience in bearing injuries, all thy constancy

Of a joyful mutation at a just man's death.

*Luke 21. Ephes. 1. Col. 1. Thes. 1. Isaiah 6. and Luke 15.

in adversities, all thy temperance in meats and drink, all the virtues of thy holy life : when all, I say, will be recounted there, all commended, all rewarded ? And wilt thou not see the value and profit of living virtuously ? wilt thou not confess from the bottom of thy heart, that the service of God is gainful, and honourable ? wilt thou not be most joyful, and bless the hour ten thousand times, wherein first thou resolvedst thyself to leave the slavery of this miserable world, to serve only so bountiful a Lord ? shalt thou not think thyself now beholden most deeply to him, or her, that persuaded thee first to take this resolution.

But moreover : when thou wilt look about thee, and consider into what a port and haven of security thou art arrived, and wilt cast back thy eyes upon the danger which thou hast passed, and wherein other men are yet in hazard, the cause of thy joy will greatly be increased. For thou wilt see evidently, how often thou wert in danger of perishing in that journey, if God had not held his special hand over thee. Thou wilt see the dangers wherein other men are ; the death and damnation whereinto many of thy friends and acquaintance have fallen, the eternal pains of hell, incurred by many that used to laugh and be merry with the world. All which will augment the unspeakable felicity of this thy so fortunate lot. And for thyself, thou mayest be secure, thou art out of all danger for ever and ever. There is no more need now of fear, of watch, of labour, or of care. Thou mayest now lay down all armour, as the children of Israel did, when they came into the land of promise, for there is no more enemy to assail thee ; there is no more wily serpent to beguile thee ; all is peace, all is security. St. Paul has no more need now to fast, to watch, or to punish his body : holy St. Hierome may now cease to afflict himself both night and day to conquer his spiritual enemy. Thy only exercise must be to rejoice and triumph, and to sing Allelujah to the lamb, who has brought thee to this felicity, and will continue thee therein for an everlasting eternity.

The seeing of Christ in glorified flesh.

O dear Christian, and most loving brother ! what excessive joy and comfort will it be at that day to see that holy lamb sitting in majesty upon his seat of state ? if three wise men of the east came so far, and so rejoiced to see him lying in a manger ; what will it be now to see him triumphing in his

glory? If St. John Baptist in his mother's womb did leap at his approaching towards him; what will his presence do in his royal and eternal kingdom? 'It surpasses all other joy and glory, that saints here in heaven,' says blessed St. Augustine,* 'to be admitted to the inestimable sight of Christ's face, and to receive the beams of glory from the splendor of his majesty. And if we were to suffer torments every day, yea, to tolerate the very pains of hell for a time, thereby to gain the sight of Christ in heaven, and to be joined in glory to the number of saints: it were nothing in respect of the worth of the reward.' O that we made such account of this matter, as this holy and learned man did! we should not live as we do, nor lose the same for such vain trifles as most men in the world do daily. But to go forward in this consideration. Imagine besides all this that hitherto has been said, what a joy it will be to thy soul at that day, to meet with her friends in the kingdom of heaven; with father, with mother, with brethren, with sisters, with wife, with husband, with masters, with

*Meeting
with our
friends in
heaven.*

scholars, with neighbours, with kindred, with acquaintance: imagine the welcomes, the mirth, the sweet embraces, that will be there: the inestimable joy whereof, the holy ancient martyr and blessed father St. Cyprian expresses in these words.† 'Who is there in peregrination abroad says he, that rejoices not exceedingly at the very thought of his return to his friends and country: O dear brethren! heaven is our country, and the inhabitants of that place are our friends and kinsfolks; why make we no more haste to salute and embrace them? An infinite multitude of our parents, brethren, children, and acquaintance do expect us in heaven; what a joy will it be both to them and to us, to meet and solace ourselves together? how inestimable will the delight of those heavenly kingdoms be, and how extreme the felicity, where eternity of life, will be void of all fear of death.' Thus far St. Cyprian; adding further a most vehement exhortation to encourage us to hasten to the attaining this happiness.

*The saying
of St.
Cyprian.*

* Serm. 37. De Sanctis

† Lib. de mortal. in fine.

*The daily
arrival of
new bre-
thren to
heaven.*

This then will be a most incomprehensible joy. But yet further, add to this triumphant exultation that daily will be in that place at the fresh arrival of new brethren and sisters coming thither from time to time, with the spoils of their enemies conquered and vanquished in this world. O what a comfortable sight will it be, to see those seats of fallen angels filled again with our fellow-creatures ? To see the crowns of glory set upon their heads, and that in all variety according to the infinite variety of their combats and conquests ? One for martyrdom, of confessing Christ before the persecutor ; another for virginity or chastity, by which he overcame the allurements of the flesh : another for poverty or humility, by which he triumphed over the vanities of the world ; another for many victories, over the devil. ‘ There ‘ the glorious choir of apostles,’ say the aforesaid St. Cyprian,* ‘ there the number of rejoicing prophets, there the ‘ innumerable multitude of holy martyrs will receive the ‘ crowns of their deaths and sufferings. There triumph- ‘ ing virgins who have overcome concupiscence with the ‘ strength of continency : there the alms-givers, who have ‘ liberally fed the poor, and, according to our Lord’s com- ‘ mandment, have made over their earthly riches to the ‘ store-house of heaven, will receive their due and peculiar ‘ reward ?’ So he. O how will virtue show herself at this day ! how will good deeds bring content to those that perform them. And among all other joys and satisfactions, this will not be the least, to see how poor souls that come thither either from the pains and miseries of this life, or from the torments of the purging fire, will be ravished, remain astonished, and, as it were, beside themselves at the sudden motion, and excessive honour done them.

*A simili-
tude ex-
pressing
the sud-
den joy of
the just
after
their de-
parture.*

If a poor afflicted man, that was out of his way, wandering alone in a deep, miry, and dirty lane, in the midst of a dark and tempestuous night, far from any company, and destitute of money, beaten with rain, terrified with thunder, stiff with cold, wearied out with labour, almost famished with hunger and thirst, and near brought to despair with a multitude of miseries ; should upon the sudden, in the twinkling of an eye, be taken out of that affliction, and placed in a goodly, large, and rich pa-

*Lib. de Mortal.

lace, furnished with clear light, comfortable sweet savours, dainty meats, soft beds, pleasant music, delicate apparel, and honourable company, all prepared for him alone, and all attending his coming, receive and embrace him, serve and honor him, crown him king forever; what would this poor man think: how would he look? what would he say? surely he would be able to say little; but rather breaking forth into tears, would for joy remain mute and dumb, his heart being not able to contain the sudden and exceeding greatness of so inestimable comfort.

So, dear brother, it will be, and much more, with these thrice happy souls, that come to heaven from the troubles of this life. For never was there cool shade so pleasant in a hot sunny day; nor the spring to the poor traveller in his greatest thirst; nor the repose of an easy bed to the wearied servant after his labour, as this rest of heaven will be to an afflicted soul who comes thither. O that

we could conceive this! that we could imprint this in our hearts, that we had a feeling of this which I say! should we follow vanities as we do? should we neglect this matter as we do? no doubt but that our coldness in purchasing these joys, proceeds from the small opinion we conceive of

The value of heaven and the account that old Saints made thereof.

them. For if we made such account and estimate of this jewel or heavenly bliss, as other merchants before us, more skilful and wiser than ourselves, have done, we should bid for it as they did, or at least should not let pass so negligently, what they sought after so carefully. St. Paul says of our Saviour, *Heb. xii. Proposito sibi gaudio sustinuit crucem*: He, laying before his eyes the joys of heaven, sustained the cross. A great estimation of the happiness he would buy at so dear a rate. But what counsel gives he to the other men about the same? surely no other, *Matt. xiii.* 'Than to go and sell all they have, to purchase this treasure.' What says St. Paul of himself? *Phil. iii.* verily, 'That he esteemed all the world as dung in respect of the purchasing of this jewel.' What does St. Paul's scholar, Ignatius bid for it? hear his words: * 'Fire, gal- lows, beasts, breaking of my bones, quartering of my members, crushing of my body, all the torments of the devil together, let them come upon me, so I may enjoy this treasure of heaven.' What does St. Augustine, that

* Hierom. in catal. † Serm. 31. De Sanctis. and 37.

‘learned father, offer ?† you have just now heard, that he would be content to suffer torments every day, yea, the very torments of hell itself, to gain this joy. Good Lord, how far did these holy saints differ from us ? how contrary were their judgments to ours in these affairs : who will now marvel that the world is judged folly by Almighty God, and that the wisdom of God is judged folly by the world ? O children of men says the prophet, *Psa. iv.* ‘Why do you ‘love vanity and seek after lying.’ Why do ye embrace straw, and condemn gold ? straw, I say, and most vile chaff, and such as finally will set your own houses on fire, and be your ruin and eternal perdition.

SECT. v.—*To what a Christian is regenerated in baptism. With a conclusion of the first part, containing motives to resolution.*

BUT now to draw towards an end of this matter, though there be no end of the thing itself, let the careful Christian consider to what he is born, and what he may be, if he will. He is born heir apparent to a kingdom without end : a kingdom void of limitation ; a kingdom of eternal bliss ; the kingdom of Almighty God himself. He is born to be joint-heir with Jesus Christ the Son of God : to reign with him ; to triumph with him : to sit in judgment, in majesty with him ; to judge the very angels of heaven with him. What greater glory can be imagined, except that of God himself ? all the joys, all the riches, all the glory that heaven contains, will be poured forth to make him happy. And to make this honour and triumph yet greater, the glorious Lamb that sits upon the throne of majesty, more shining than the precious diamond ; from whose seat there proceeds thunder and lightning without end ; and at whose feet, the four and twenty elders lay down their crowns ; this Lamb, I say, this glorious God and Man, will himself honour and minister unto him. Who then would not esteem this royal inheritance ? who would not make greater account thereof than we do ? especially seeing the gaining and winning of the same is now, by the benefit of our redemption, and grace purchased thereby, brought to be in our own hands ? according to the express words of our Saviour, saying : *Matt. xi.* ‘The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.’ That is to say, by the force of God’s covenant made with Christians,

they that live virtuously will obtain the same; and whatsoever Christian leads this virtuous life, takes heaven, as it were, by force and by violence. 'The matter is put in the power of the doer,' says St. Augustine,* 'for the kingdom of heaven suffers violence. This thing, O man, that is, the kingdom of heaven requires no other price but thyself; it is so much worth, as thou art worth; give thyself, thou shalt have it.' By which he signifies that every man, how poor or needy soever he is in this world, may gain this inheritant to himself: may make himself a prince, a king, an emperor, if he will; even the meanest and most miserable man, I say, upon earth. O most wonderful bounty and liberality of our Saviour! O princely heart and unspeakable mercy! O incredible prodigality, as I may say, of treasures so inestimable as the most infinite and endless riches of heaven.

Tell me now, gentle reader, and most loving and dear brother, why wilt thou not accept of this offer of thy Saviour? why wilt thou not make account of this kingdom? why wilt thou not buy this endless glory of him, for so little labour as he requires for it? hear how earnestly he persuades thee to bargain with him? I do give thee counsel to buy of me pure and tried gold, to the end thou mayest be rich. Why wilt thou not follow this counsel, of one that means not to deceive thee? nothing can grieve this thy Saviour more than that men will seek with such pains to buy straw and chaff in Ægypt, whereas he would sell them fine gold at a lower price at home: and that they will needs purchase puddle-water with more labour and cost, than he would require for ten times as much pure liquor, out of the very fountain of life itself. There is not the wickedest man that lives in the world, but takes more pains to go to hell, as will be declared more largely hereafter, than the most laborious servant of God does in purchasing heaven and eternal bliss. O folly! O madness.

Follow not then this fantastical frenzy of earthly wisdom, make not yourself partaker of this error. For the day will come when you will see them do heavy penance for their folly; at which time your heart will be truly joyful, that you had never any part or portion among them. Let them go

The buying of heaven.

The folly of seeking worldly vanities

now and bestow their time in transitory vanities, in sinful pleasures and delights of this world; let them now build their pleasant palaces, let them purchase dignities, hoard up money, and buy a little earth: let them hunt after honours, and frame castles in the air; the time will come ere long, if you believe Christ himself, wherein you will have small cause to envy their felicity. If they do think and talk basely now of the glory and riches of God and of his saints in heaven; not esteeming them in comparison of their own, or contemning them rather, because carnal pleasures are not found there: make little account of their words, 1 *Cor.* ii. 'But the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the spirit of God.' If horses were promised by their masters good feast and banquet, most evident it is, that they could imagine nothing else but provender and water to be their best cheer, for they have no knowledge of daintier dishes: so fares it with these men, who being accustomed only to carnal pleasures, can mount with their minds no higher than to brutish sensuality. But I have showed to thee before, gentle reader some ways and considerations to conceive greater matters; although, as I have advertised thee often, we must confess still with St. Paul, 1 *Cor.* ii. that no human heart can conceive the least part thereof. For which cause also, it is not unlike that St. Paul himself was forbid, 2 *Cor.* xii. to utter the things which he had seen and heard, in his most wonderful miraculous assumption to the third heaven.

The conclusion with the application of all that has been said.

Wherefore to conclude at length this whole chapter, you have to consider, dear and loving brother, that this heavenly bliss, which hitherto I have endeavoured to describe unto you, is only for them that will strive for it, as St. Paul well notes; and no man is crowned in this glory *but such only as will fight for it*, according as the same apostle does teach and forewarn us: for not every one that says to Christ, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but they only who do the will of Christ's eternal father who is in heaven. And although this kingdom of Christ is set out to all men, yet every man will not arrive to reign with Christ: but such only as will be content to suffer with Christ. Though the kingdom of heaven is subject to violence, as has been said, yet no man can enter there by force, but he only whose good deeds will

follow him to open the gates; that is, *who enters*, as the prophet says, *Psalm xiv. without spot and has wrought justice*. My meaning then is, that as I have showed the exceeding greatness and worth of this treasure, gentle reader, so you, being a Christian, should also conceive the right way of gaining the same? which is no other by the testimony of Christ himself, than only, by a holy and virtuous life, in keeping his commandments. You are therefore to sit down and consider, according to our Saviour's counsel, what you will do and determine herein; whether you have so much spiritual money, as is sufficient to build this tower, and to make this heavenly war or no; that is whether you have so much good will and courage in you, as to live the virtuous life required for gaining of this eternal kingdom. This is the question, this is the principal point, this is the whole issue of all the matter. And whatsoever has been spoken in this book before, either of your Creator and creation; of your particular end; of the majesty, bounty, and justice of your God and Saviour; as also of the account he will demand of you, and of the punishments or rewards reserved for the life to come; has been meant by me, to this only end and purpose, that considering all that has been said, you should finally resolve what to do, and not to pass over your time in careless negligence, as many are accustomed to do never seeing their own errors, till it be too late to amend them. For the love of God then, dear Christian, and for the love you bear to your own soul and eternal welfare, shake off this most dangerous security, wherein flesh and blood is wont to lull the careless people of this world. Make some earnest resolution to secure your state in the life to come. Recal to mind oftentimes that this is the moment whereon depends an eternity of bliss, or woe hereafter. If it be but a moment, yet a moment of so great consequence and importance; how is it passed over by earthly men with so little care and thought! what reason may be alledged for your so dangerous negligence! what cause may be assigned for so extreme a folly? all the creatures of earth, heaven, and hell, even from the very first to the last, if you examine them all, may be arguments, and motives unto you, to leave this perilous course wherein you are: all are, or may be, books, or lessons, and sermons to you,

*The final
end of all
that has
been said.*

*An ex-
hortation.*

*A saying
to be re-
membered.*

preaching and protesting, some by their punishment, some by their glory, some by their beauty, and all by their creation, that you ought, without delay, to make resolutions of another kind of life : and that all is vanity, all is folly, all is iniquity, all is misery, except only to serve your Lord and Maker. And so with this, will I make an end of this first part, reserving some other things to be spoken of in the second, for the removing of such impediments, as our spiritual adversary is wont to lay against this good work of resolution, as against the first step and agree to our salvation. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was content to shed his own precious blood to purchase this noble inheritance of this kingdom for us, give us his holy grace, to esteem it, as the importance of the matter requires, and not to lose our title thereunto by our own neglect.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

A

CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY,

GUIDING MEN TO THEIR

ETERNAL SALVATION.

(IN TWO PARTS.)

PART II.

WHICH TREATS OF THE OBSTACLES AND IMPEDIMENTS
THAT HINDER RESOLUTION; AND
HOW THEY MAY BE
REMOVED.

BY THE REV. ROBERT PARSONS,

PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

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MDCCCXLV.

A

BRIEF METHOD

HOW TO USE THE FOLLOWING

TREATIES, CHAPTERS, AND CONSIDERATIONS, TO
DIVERS PURPOSES :

ACCORDING TO THE DIFFERENT QUALITY, NECESSITY, AND OTHER
CIRCUMSTANCES OF PERSONS.

It is to be remembered, that points and parcels of the book which are here assigned for every one to apply to himself, may be accommodated and practised by each man towards his friend, or by a parent towards his child, or by a master towards his servant or scholar, and especially by a confessor towards his penitent; persuading, assigning, or commanding him to read such parcels of this book, as he thinks may most profit his soul, in the state wherein he stands.

Of divers States, Conditions, and Qualities of Men.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>Lumpish
and sloth-
ful.</i> | 1. If a man be lumpish and heavy, and unwilling to hear or think of spiritual things, let him read chap. 1. part. 1. of in-consideration : as also the last chapter of the book, touching sloth and negligence, <i>page 234.</i> |
| <i>Abhorring
spiritual
books.</i> | 2. Let him examine also the cause of this unwillingness according to the three causes set down there, <i>ibid.</i> especially if he find in himself any horror against reading of spiritual books, as many do. |
| <i>Down-
right
atheists.</i> | 3. He that is tempted in his faith, has many things in this book for his confirmation, and first, if he be inclined to plain atheism, or doubt whether there be a God or no, let him read the whole second chapter, <i>page 15.</i> |
| <i>Doubters
of God's
providence</i> | 4. If he confess God, and doubt only of his particular Providence, in disposing all matters of this world, let him read the fourth argument of the metaphysician, <i>p. 25. First Part.</i> |
| <i>Doubters of the
souls immor-
tality.</i> | 5. If he doubt the soul's immortality, let him consider the fifth argument of the metaphysician, <i>p. 27. First Part.</i> |
| <i>Doubters of
the holy scrip-
tures.</i> | He that questions the infallible truth of holy scriptures, or any part thereof, let him read the third section of the chap-ter, <i>p. 34. First Part.</i> |

A BRIEF METHOD OF THE USE OF THINGS.

7. He that has any doubt or scruple about any thing in Christian Religion, let him read the fourth chapter, p. 76. For example, if he doubt whether Christ be true God and Man, he will find it proved, p. 89. First Part.

*Doubters in
Christian
Religion.*

He that is convinced of the truth of Christian Religion in general, but is to seek among too many sects and opinions, which to follow, let him read the first part of the fifth chapter, treating of *right faith*, p. 178 : also the fifth chapter, (part 2.) of the examples of true resolution, p. 149.

8. If a man find himself or others, over careless and confident, or without fear of God's severe justice, let him read the seventh chapter p. 216, of *the accounting-day* ; also the eleventh chapter, p. 281, of *punishment after death* ; and the sixth chapter (part 2.) of *presumption*, p. 189.

*Careless and
over confi-
dent men,*

9. He that gives himself wholly to pursue worldly honours, and thinks he may so go to heaven, let him read the third chapter, p. 65, first part, of *man's final end* ; also the third, fourth, and fifth points of the fourth chapter, *concerning the world* ; p. 145, &c. also, if a man feel himself desirous of the pleasures and commodities of this world, or afflicted, because he has them not, let him read the fourth chapter, p. 114, of *the world* : and in particular, if he love honour, see p. 121 ; if esteem of wisdom, see p. 124 ; if beauty, see p. 125 ; if brave apparel, see p. 126 ; if riches, see p. 128, Part ii. &c.

*Worldly and
ambitious
men.*

10. He that finds himself, or others, easy to fall into sin, and that without fear or remorse, let him read the eighth chapter, p. 234, of *the nature of sin and sinners* ; also the ninth chapter, p. 247, of *God's majesty and benefits*.

*Those that
fear not sin.*

11. He that makes little reckoning of the joys of the world to come, so as that he may but enjoy the pleasures of this life, or is little moved with the thought of heaven, let him read the twelfth chapter, p. 318, of *the rewards after this life*.

*Slighters of
the world to
come.*

12. If a man long to know, in what state he is, in the sight of God let him read the fifth chapter p. 178. which shows who is a true Christian, Also the third chapter. p. 65. which teach a man to take a scantling of that matter.

*Desirous to
know their
own state.*

13. A man that is tempted to despair in regard of his wicked life, may read the first chapter, p. 15. Part ii. Of *God's endless mercies*.

*Ready to
despair.*

14. If any person be offended, to see the contrarities and vexations, that fall out daily in God's Church against the Catholic faith and good men, let him read the fifth chapter, p. 149. Of *Examples of true resolution*. Also the chapter, Of *Tribulation*, p. 79. Part ii.

*Pussillant-
mous crea-
tures.*

The same let them do, that find themselves or their friends in tribulation, or do stand in fear of it, for that they love their own ends.

15. He that is tender, delicate, and fearful of the pains which a virtuous life requires, cry weary of well-doing, let him read the second chapter of difficulties, p. 41.

*Nice and do-
licate per-
sons.*

16. He that thinks himself young, and, upon that account defers his conversion, let him read the tenth chapter, p. 259. Of *Death*. Also the seventh chapter, p. 205. Part ii. Of *the manifold dangers of delay*.

*Young per-
sons that
think they
may delay.*

Finally, all persons of what quality, calling, or condition soever they be, may find something in this book to be considered, used, and applied to their particular case.

A BRIEF METHOD FOR THE USE OF THINGS.

How the former Treatises may be used to Meditation and Prayer.

Mental prayer.

For as much as mental prayer is nothing else but an elevation of our spirit unto Almighty God, and an exercise of our soul, wherein she treats, in the presence of her Creator, the affairs which appertain to her own salvation (whereunto also the treatises of this book do all tend) I have sorted them into two kinds of meditations, to be used twice every day, for the space of a month or thereabouts. Which being ended, the reader may begin again, and so continue the perpetual memory thereof, taking now of one kind, and then of another, as he likes best. And in this meditation let him observe these few rules following.

Rules to be observed in meditation.

Preparation. First, that when he goes to meditate, he thinks with himself before he begins, what, and where, and with whom he is to deal, and how he would stand in the presence of a far less king, of this world, if he were to go before him, as now he is to present himself before the Majesty of Almighty God.

External humiliation. Secondly, that he do not only humble himself in heart, even unto the ground, before so great a Majesty, but also that he express it (if he can) by true external action, as Christ and St. Paul did, when they cast themselves upon their knees at the beginning of their prayers.

Petition. Thirdly, having made the sign of the cross upon Breast and Forehead, in the name and confession of the Blessed Trinity, let him frame some short petition and prayer, (such as after follows) to demand grace to profit his soul by that meditation.

Reading over the matter. Fourthly, let him read, with great attention, the piece assigned for his meditation, and let him read it with such quiet of mind, that he may say with the prophet, *Psalm lxxxiv. I will hear what it shall please our Lord to speak unto me.*

Rumination. Fifthly, having read over the matter, (or before, if any special thing move him as he reads let him lay aside the book, and quietly revolve and meditate in his mind that which he has read, and this in what decent posture he pleases, as he finds best for the repose of his mind. And whatsoever he finds to move him most, let him insist upon that, and apply it seriously, to the stirring up of himself to do his duty.

Prayer. Sixthly, when he has done his best, to enkindle his affections in such good motions, as the matter of the meditation does minister, be it love, reverence, fear, detestation of sin, or the like, then let him turn to Almighty God with all the power he can, and demand with great fervour whatsoever his soul in that instant most desires, and so he may conclude with the prayer that is here assigned or some such like, which is commonly to be said devoutly kneeling.

A prayer to be said immediately before we read the matter of our Meditation.

O everlasting, Omnipotent, and most merciful Lord and Father, I present myself here before thy divine Majesty, most humbly craving the assistance of thy holy Spirit, for my direction and instruction in this meditation that now I take in hand; to the end that my soul may re-

ceive comfort and benefit thereby, in learning to know both thee and herself, thy sacred will and her bounden duty, thy judgments and her accounts, thy endless mercies and her infinite offences. Give me O Father of all Mercy, and Creator of all good Spirits, such a docile and tender heart, as may be pierced with thy holy inspirations. Grant that the holy fire, of godly affection, may be kindled in my soul by this Meditation, as it was in the heart of thy servant David, in the like holy exercise. Make my spirit attend to those fatherly admonitions which thou shalt please to give me in this time of prayer. Illuminate my understanding, incline my will, stir up my affections, my desires ; confirm my memory, in the remembrance of all such things as it shall please thy goodness to reveal unto me, at this instant or otherwise, for my salvation. Grant all this, (O my most merciful God) for thy dear Son our Saviour JESUS' sake, who has assured us, that thou wilt never deny a good spirit to him that in sincerity demands it.

A prayer after Meditation.

Behold, O my God, behold, O my most patient and merciful Lord, how I have passed over this time of meditation and treating with thee. With how much negligence, sloth, coldness, and distraction, and with how little feeling of thy good motions within me : but thou, O Lord, knowest all my infirmities and miseries, and therefore I crave of thee pardon for them. I thank thee also most heartily and humbly, for all the good thoughts and suggestions, which have presented themselves to my mind, in time of this meditation, as most holy ambassadors sent from thy heavenly throne, to deal with me for the gaining of thy kingdom, whose blessed voices, and most profitable speeches, I beseech thy divine goodness to give me grace to imprint in my heart, and seek to put in execution, in the course of my life to come ; to the end that my judgment and damnation be not the more grievous in respect of these thy benefits, but rather that my life being amended hereby, and my soul stirred up to more zeal in thy service, I may finally be made partaker with thy true children, of that eternal bliss which thou hast prepared for such as love, fear, and serve thee, and yield obedience to those holy inspirations which thou sendest them for their eternal happiness.

After this he may say *Pater, Ave, Credo*, and other such devotions as he likes best, and as best suits with his present disposition.

Arguments to meditate upon.

The first sort of arguments for meditation.

The first sort of meditations, (being twenty in number,) belong more peculiarly to speculation, discourse, and knowledge, than to stir up affections ; and therefore are sometimes to be used for variety and recreation of the mind when one is either weary, or not willing to be spurred on by the other, which have more power to exhort and move. They are divided, for more facility sake, into the times of morning and evening for ten days together.

THE FIRST DAY.

Morning.—Let him meditate from the beginning of the second chap-

A BRIEF METHOD FOR THE USE OF THINGS.

ter, p. 14. unto the second section p. 20. *how evident it is by all creatures that there is a God.*

Evening. From p. 20. unto p. 28. let him contemplate *the arguments of the natural and supernatural philosophers whereby they prove God.*

THE SECOND DAY.

Morning.—From p. 28. unto the end of the section p. 35. *consider the proofs of moral philosophers for the same purpose.*

Evening. From the beginning of the third section, p. 35 examine the six first arguments for proof of *Holy Scriptures*, ending p. 46.

THE THIRD DAY.

Morning.—From p. 46. unto 59. see seventh Argument for the scriptures, containing *ten Prophecies.*

Evening. From p. 60. unto the end of the chapter, consider the eighth and last argument for scriptures, containing *the approbation of Heathen Writers, together with the conclusion of the chapter*, to p. 62.

THE FOURTH DAY.

Morning.—The beginning of the fourth chapter, p. 76. together with the first consideration of the second section touching Christ promised, which ends, p. 88.

Evening. The second consideration of the same section, how Christ was promised to be both God and Man, from p. 88. to 94.

THE FIFTH DAY.

Morning.—From p. 94, unto 100, containing the third and fourth considerations, *How Christ was promised to change the law of Moses, together with the particulars foretold of Christ's life.*

Evening.—The fifth Consideration, *How Christ was foretold to the Gentiles, both by Philosophers, Prophets, and Oracles*, from p. 99 to 107.

THE SIXTH DAY.

Morning.—From the beginning of the third section, p. 107. read unto 122. *of the time wherein Christ appeared, whether it was the same that was foretold or no.*

Evening.—From p. 122, unto 129, consider the second consideration of *Christ's birth and infancy until the time of his preaching.*

THE SEVENTH DAY.

Morning.—From p. 129, unto 136. contemplate the third consideration, of Jesus, touching his *Life and Actions.*

Evening.—From p. 136 unto the end of the section, p. 145. under the fourth consideration of Jesus concerning his *Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension.*

THE EIGHTH DAY

Morning.—Begin the fourth section, p. 145 with the first consideration thereof, ending 148, of *Christ's Church and her wonderful increase presently after his departure.*

A BRIEF METHOD FOR THE USE OF THINGS

Evening.—From p. 148, unto 153 follows the second consideration of *Christ's Apostles, and their wonderful doings.*

THE NINTH DAY

Morning.—From p. 153, unto 156, is the third consideration, of *Christ's Evangelists, and how their writings must needs be true.*

Evening.—From p. 156, to 163, ensue the fourth and fifth considerations, of *Christ's Martyrs, and of the subjection of Spirits in the Primitive Church.*

THE TENTH DAY.

Morning.—From p. 163. unto 169. read the sixth considerations, of *the punishments that fell upon Christ's enemies both Jews and Gentiles.*

Evening.—From p. 169. to the end of the chapter p. 178. read the seventh consideration, of *the fulfilling Jesus's Prophecies, together with the conclusion of the whole chapter.*

The second sort of Meditations (being twenty-eight in number) containing matter more proper to stir up our affections to Piety and Devotion, and are divided into fourteen days or two weeks, allowing to each day two Meditations.

MONDAY.

Morning.—Contemplate the whole chapter of inconsideration, Page 1.

Evening.—The whole chapter of Man's final End, p. 65.

TUESDAY.

Morning.—The first part of the fifth chapter, *who is a true Christian* concerning Faith, p. 178 unto 186.

Evening.—The second part of the same chapter, concerning works, p. 186, first part, unto the end.

WEDNESDAY.

Morning.—The first and second parts of the sixth chapter, of resisting sin, p. 144. First Part.

Evening.—The third part of the same chapter, of labouring in good works, p. 209. First Part.

THURSDAY.

Morning.—The first and second part of the seventh chapter, of the preparation that shall go before the last Accounting-day, p. 216. to 225. First Part.

Evening.—The third and fourth parts of the same chapter, and of the sentence that shall ensue, p. 225.

FRIDAY.

Morning.—The eighth chapter, of the nature of sin and sinners, p. 234. First Part.

Evening.—The ninth chapter, of God's Majesty and Benefits, p. 247. First Part.

SATURDAY.

Morning.—The tenth chapter, of the hour of our death, p. 259. 1st. pt.

A BRIEF METHOD FOR THE USE OF THINGS.

Evening.—The eleventh chapter, of the punishment after death, p. 281. First Part.

SUNDAY.

Morning.—The first, second, and third parts of the twelfth chapter, of the reward of this life in general and particular, p. 318 to 332. First Part.

Evening.—The fourth part of the same chapter, of the circumstances increasing the same joy, p. 332. &c. First part.

THE SECOND WEEK.

MONDAY.

Morning.—The first part of the first chapter, Part 2. of the exceeding love which God bears unto mankind, against the despair of his mercy, p. 18. to 23.

Evening.—The second and third parts of the same chapter, how, and by how many ways God expresses his said love unto us, and what assurance he gives of pardon to such as repent, p. 28. to 35.

TUESDAY.

Morning.—The fourth part of the same chapter, containing examples and instructions how to avoid temptations of despair, p. 35.

Evening. The first part of the second chapter, of the fallacy of supposed difficulties, with the particular helps to overcome them, p. 41

WEDNESDAY.

Morning. The second part of the same chapter, containing Means and Instructions for overcoming difficulties, p. 46 to the end.

Evening. The first two points of the third chapter, about tribulation, p. 79 to 94.

THURSDAY.

Morning. The third and fourth points of the same chapter, from p. 94. to the end.

Evening. The first point of the fourth chapter, treating of the vanities of the world, p. 117, to 133.

FRIDAY.

Morning. The other parts of the same chapter, p. 133 to the end.

Evening. The fifth chapter of examples of resolution, p. 149.

SATURDAY

Morning. The sixth chapter against Presumption, p. 189.

Evening. The seventh chapter, of Delay, p. 205.

SUNDAY.

Morning. The first part of the eighth chapter, of Sloth, p. 237 to 241.

Evening. The second and third parts of the same chapter, treating of Negligence and Hardness of Heart, from p. 241 to the end.

PART. II.

Which treats of the obstacles and impediments that hinder Resolution ; and how they may be removed.

THE ARGUMENT.

In the former part of this book, there have been laid down sundry reasons and considerations, whereby to stir up men to a firm resolution of serving God ; and, if the nature of virtue, which in itself is so amiable, was to be considered they would undoubtedly be sufficient to that effect, were not the subtilties of our spiritual enemy very great and dangerous in this behalf, and his endeavours most diligent against our purpose. For so it fares, that when he sees that the judgment of man is convinced by the former reasons and demonstrations, and that it can no longer resist or deny, but that the only true wisdom is to break off from the vanities and sinful life of this world, and to betake ourselves to the most honorable and advantageous service of Almighty God, then this infernal foe, being not able further to delude our judgment, or to blind our understanding, employs himself by all means possible to hinder us from following our own judgment ; alledging either the difficulty of obtaining pardon, or the pains and hardships of a virtuous life, or the loss of worldly honours and earthly commodities, or some other such

The subtilty of the devil.

like fraud and trifle ; whereby to hinder our resolution, or, at least, to defer it so long, that he may hope we shall never make it afterwards to our gain or comfort.

To prevent this malicious and most perilous endeavour of our ghostly adversary, this second part is adjoined, containing the chief and principal impediments that usually do rise against resolution, either out of our own corrupt nature, or infirmity, or suggested by our mortal foe ; the removal and confutation of which obstacles and impediments, will bring no small light, I hope to the studious reader, for the true understanding of both his own state, and the deceits and illusions used by his said enemies. Read then this part also, dear Christian brother, with no less diligence than the former, for the profit thereof will be equal, and your content perhaps far greater, respect of the variety of matters handled therein, and of the manifold comforts which your soul in perusing the same will thereby receive.

A CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

Of the first impediment that hinders Sinners from Resolution; which is mistrust and diffidence in God's mercy, by reason of the multitude and grievousness of their offences.

AMONG all other grievous and most perilous thoughts which in this world are accustomed to offer themselves to a mind entangled and loaded with great sins, this usually is the first (through the nature of sin itself, and crafty suggestions of our ghostly enemy) to fall into distrust and despair of God's mercy. Such was the thought of the most unhappy Cain, one of the first inhabitants of mankind upon earth; who after the murder of his own brother, and other sins by him committed, burst forth into that horrible and desperate speech, so greatly offensive to his Lord and Maker: *Gen. iv.* 'My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon.' Such was, in like manner, the desperate conceit of wicked Judas, one of the first of them that were chosen to the particular service of our Redeemer; who feeling his conscience oppressed with manifold enormous iniquities, and most of all with the betraying of his own Lord and master; took no other way of amendment or redress, but to destroy himself both in body and soul; saying only these words, full of miserable distrust and despair, *Matt. xxvii.* 'I have sinned 'in betraying innocent blood,' not asking forgiveness nor hoping for a pardon. By which words, and his most wretched end, he more grievously offended and injured his most loving and merciful Saviour, than by all his former iniquities committed against him.

This then, is the first and greatest rock, on which a sinful soul overburdened with the charge of her iniquities, and tossed in the waves of despairing thoughts, by the blast and storms of God's threats against sinners, does commonly lose herself. This is the most horrible depth and dungeon, where

*Despair on
ordinary
temptation
to great
sinners.*

*The ship-
wreck of
souls over-
laden with
sins.*

of the holy scripture says : *Prov. xviii.* ‘The wicked man ‘when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth.’ This is that incurable wound of which God Almighty speaks by the prophet Jeremiah when he says, *Jer. xxx.* ‘Thy ‘bruise is incurable, thy wound is very grievous.’

This is that great and main impediment that stops the conduits of God’s holy grace from flowing into the soul of a sinful man. This is the knife that cuts in sunder all those heavenly blessed cords, wherewith our sweet Lord and Saviour endeavours to draw to repentance the hearts of sinners, saying by his prophet : *Hosea xi.* ‘I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love!’ For by this means every sinful conscience comes to Almighty God, as did Jerusalem, when being admonished of her sins, and exhorted by his prophet to amendment of life, she said, *Jer. ii. 25.* ‘I have lost all hope, I will not do it.’ To which lamentable state, when a sinful man is once arrived ; the step he takes, is to ingulf himself into the depth of all detestible enormities, and to abandon his soul to the very sink of all filth and abominations, according as St. Paul said of the Gentiles of like case. *Ephes. iv. & Rom. i.* ‘Who despairing, have given up themselves to impudicity unto the ‘operation of all uncleanness.’

Which desperate resolution of the impious, is the thing, as I have noted before, that, most of all other offences upon earth, exasperates the indignation of Almighty God, depriving his divine majesty of that most excellent property, wherein he chiefly delights and glories, which is his infinite and unspeakable mercy. This might be declared by divers examples of holy writ ; though two will suffice at present. The first is, of the people of Israel, not long before their banishment into Babylon ; who being threatened from God by the prophet Jeremiah, that manifold punishment were impendant over their heads, for the grievous sins committed by them against his majesty, began, instead of repentance to fall into despair, and consequently resolved to take that impious course of a desolute life, alledged before out of St. Paul. For thus they answered God who exhorted them by his threats to reform their wicked lives : *Jer. xviii.* ‘We ‘have no hopes, for we will go after our thoughts, and we ‘will do every one according to the perverseness of his

The misery of desperation.

The thing wherein God most delights is mercy.

evil heart. Whereat God was infinitely incensed, and broke forth into this vehement interrogation: *Interrogate Gentes: quis audivit talia horribilia?* Ask and enquire of the very Gentiles, whether ever among them were heard any such horrible blasphemies? And after this, to express more emphatically the intolerable injury herein offered to his majesty, he commanded the prophet Jeremiah to go forth of his own house, to a potter's shop, who was framing his vessels upon the wheel. Which Jeremiah having done, he saw before his face a pot crushed and broke all in pieces upon the wheel by the potter and thinking thereby that the vessel had been altogether unprofitable, and to be cast away; he saw the same clay presently framed again by the potter, into a new vessel more excellent than before. Whereat God said unto him, *Jer. xviii.*

A desperate resolution.

A marvellous example of God's clemency.

' Cannot I do with you, as this potter, O house of Israel, saith the Lord, behold, as clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel I will suddenly speak against a nation and against a kingdom, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy. If that nation against which I have spoken, shall repent of their evil, I also will repent me of the evil, that I have thought to do to them.' And then he proceeds forward, declaring unto Jeremiah, the exceeding grief and indignation which he conceives, that any sinner, whatsoever should despair of mercy and pardon at his hands.

The second example is of the same people of Israel, during the time of their banishment in Babylon, at which time being afflicted with many miseries for their sins and threatened with many more to come, because they changed not the course of their former wicked conversation: they began to despair of God's mercy, and to say to the prophet Ezekiel, that lived banished among them, and exhorted them to amendment, upon assured hope of God's favour towards them, *Ezek. xxxiii.* ' Our iniquities and our sins are upon us, and we pine away in them: how then can we live?' at which thought God, greatly moved, spake thus by Ezekiel: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live, &c.* Why will ye die, O house of Israel? and then he makes a large and vehement protestation, that how grie-

Another example of God's wonderful mercy.

viously soever any person offends him ; nay, if he had given express sentence of death and damnation upon him : yet, if he repent himself of his sin, and exercise* judgment and justice for the time to come : all his sins that he has committed shall be forgiven him, because he has done judgment and justice.

And this might be sufficient, although nothing else were said, to remove this first obstacle and impediment of true resolution, which is the despair of God's infinite goodness and mercy. Nevertheless, for a more evident clearing and demonstration of this matter, and for the greater comfort of such as feel themselves burdened with the heavy weight of their iniquities, committed against his divine majesty, I have thought expedient in this place to declare more at large this abundant subject of God's mercy towards all such as will truly return to him, in what time, state or condition, or age soever in this life, which shall be showed and set down by these four points and parts that follow.

SECT. I. *What manner of love God bears to man.*

FIRST of all then, this endless mercy may be comprehended by the infinite and incomprehensible love that Almighty God bears man ; which love is always the mother of favour, grace, and mercy. If you demand of me in what sort I prove that the love of God is so exceeding great towards man, I answer as the cosmographer is wont to do, who, by the greatness and multitude of the streams and rivers, frames a conjecture of the fountain from which they flow. The proper rivers which are derived and run forth of love, are favours and benefits, which being infinite, endless, and inestimable, bestowed by God on man (as in another place has been declared, and the whole universal frame of this world does abundantly witness) it follows most evidently, that the origin, fountain, and spring of all these favours, graces and good turns, must needs be infinite and immeasurable, and far surpassing all compass of man's understanding.

If you require of me the cause and reason, why Almighty God should so wonderfully be affected towards man, I can

* Judgment and justice to be used in true repentance ; that is judgment upon ourselves, and justice to others.

directly yield none at all, but rather marvel with holy Job, *Job. vii.* why so sovereign a majesty should set his heart upon so base a subject. Notwithstanding, the holy scripture seems to alledge one principal reason of this love, where it is said, *Sap. xi.* thou hatest none of the things, which thou hast made, but thou hast mercy upon all, because they are thine, O Lord. And the like manner reasoning God uses himself, when he says, by his proph.

Ezekiel: *Ezek. xviii.* 'Behold all souls are mine.'

and hereupon he infers a little after: Can I have then the will to damn a wicked man, seeing that his soul is mine, created and redeemed by me? as though he would say, this would be against all order and equity. And the reason of this manner of speech and argument, is, because every man naturally is inclined to love the things that are of his own making. So we see, that if

The first cause why God loves us, for that he is our Creator and we are his own work.

a man has an orchard wherein he has a great variety of trees and plants, yet if there be but one of his own peculiar grafting, that flourishes and prospers well, he takes more delight therein than in any of the rest, because it is his own workmanship. So in like manner, if a man has a vineyard of his own planting and trimming. For which respect the holy prophet David finding himself and the whole kingdom of Jewry in great affliction and calamity, thought no other means so forcible to draw God to compassion, and commiseration of their case, as to cry out to him in this manner, *Psalm lxxix.* O thou that rulest Israel look towards us, and be attentive: Thou hast brought a vineyard out of Ægypt, thou hast cast out the Gentiles, and hast planted it. Turn again, O God of Hosts, look down from heaven and see, and visit this vineyard, &c. which thy own right hand has planted. The holy prophet Isaiah used the like manner of persuasion to move God, when he said, *Isa. lxiv.* 'O Lord, thou art our Father, and we are clay: and thou art our Maker, and we all are the works of thy hands.'

But above all others, the blessed man Job stands, as it were, disputing with God about this matter, saying, *Job x.* Have not thy hands made me? have they not framed me as clay? hast thou not compacted me as a cheese is made of milk? hast thou not knit my bones and sinews together, and covered my flesh with skin? hast not thou given me life, and

The confidence of Job in that God had made him.

conserved my spirit with thy continual protection? howsoever thou seemest to dissemble these matters, and hide them in thy heart, yet I know that thou rememberest them all, and art not unminful of them.

By which words this holy man signified, that although God suffered him to be tempted and afflicted in this life, so that he might seem to have forgotten him, yet, he was well assured that his divine majesty could not forsake or despise him, because he was his created, and the work of his own hands. In which very name of workmanship, holy David took so great comfort, considering that the workman cannot chuse but be favorable to his own work, (especially so excellent and bountiful a workman as Al-

The assured hope David had in this, that he was God's workmanship.

mighty God is, towards a work made to his own figure and likeness) that in all his necessities, nay, even in his greatest infirmities of flesh, and most grievous offences committed against his majesty, he conceives most assured hope of mercy and pardon, upon this consideration: That he was his workmanship; and consequently, that it was well known to his divine wisdom, of how brittle and infirm a metal he was made. For thus once he particularly reasons upon this matter: *Psalm cii.* As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our iniquities from us. As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him: for he knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust.

In which discourse the holy prophet makes mention of two things that did assure him of God's mercy: the one, that God was his Creator and Maker, and thereby privy to the frailty of his constitution and nature: the other, that he was a Father, whose property is to have compassion on his children: and this is a second reason, more strong and forcible perhaps than the former, why every man may be assured of pardon, that heartily turns to Almighty God; considering that it has pleased his divine majesty, not only to be the Creator of man as he is of all other things, but also a father, which is a title of the greatest love and union that nature has left to things in this world. Whereof a certain philosopher said well, that no man could conceive the love of a parent's heart but he only that had a child of his own. For which respect our Saviour *JESUS*

The second reason of assurance of God's love because he is our Father.

to put us in mind of this most fervent love, and thereby, as it were, by one fire to kindle another within our hearts, used oftentimes and ordinarily to repeat this sweet name of father, in his speeches to his followers, and thereupon founded divers most excellent and comfortable discourses ; as once when he dissuaded them from over much care and worldly solicitude, he adds this reason : *Matt. vi.* ‘ Your father (in heaven) knoweth what you stand in need of :’ as if he should say, he knowing your wants, and being your father, you need not trouble yourselves with great anxiety in these matters : for a father’s heart cannot but be provident and careful for his children. He makes the like deduction in the same place, to the same effect, by comparison of the birds in the air, and other irrational creatures. For which, if God makes, says he, so abundant provision, as the whole world may witness that he does ; much more careful will he be to provide for men that are his own children, which are more dear to him than any other created terrestrial things.

All which speeches and reasons of our Saviour, are derived from the nature and property of a parent, who cannot but affect and love his children ; especially such a father whom Christ calls celestial, who, in this perfection of truly fatherly love, as far exceeds all earthly parents, as in power, clemency, and goodness, Almighty God surpasses the infirmity of his feeble creatures. Such a father, as has not only given life and being to his children ; but also, as St. Paul says, *Gal. iv.* has poured into their hearts the divine spirit of his only eternal son, stirring them up to most assured confidence and invincible hope in his fatherly goodness and protection. And upon assurance of this hope, sinners as well as saints, have, from the beginning, fled to him confidently under this title of paternity and father-hood, and never were deceived. So the prophet Isaiah, as well in his own name, as in the name of the sinful people of Israel, doubted not to cry : *Isa. lxiii.* ‘ Thou art our father ; and Abraham hath not known us, and Israel hath been ignorant of us. Thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer, everlasting is thy name.’ And to confirm this assurance unto us, Christ sent that most sweet and comfortable ambassage to his disciples presently upon his resurrection ; *John xx.* ‘ Go to my

*What a
Father
God is.*

*Christ’s
comfortable
ambassage.*

‘brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my father and to your father; to my God and to your God.’ By which two words of Father and God, the one of love, and the other of power; the one of infinite good will, the other of endless ability, he took away from each man, that should have recourse to this merciful Lord and Father, all doubt of success.

How greatly the respect of a father moves God. God himself also after many threats used by the prophet Jeremiah against the people of Israel for their sins, in the end, lest they should despair, changes his style, assuring them of many graces and favours, if they would return to him; telling

the house of Israel that he had loved her from the beginning, and had sought to draw her to him by threats, to the end that he might have mercy upon her: and that now he intended to build her up again, to adorn her with joy and exultation, to gather her children from all corners of the earth, to refresh them with the waters and river of life. And all this, says he, *Jer. xxxi. Quia factus sum Israël Pater*: because I am now become a father to Israel. And in the same place to wicked Ephraim, the head city of the rebellious kingdom of Samaria, that was to receive mercy, he says: Ephraim is become my honourable son, my delicate and dearly beloved child: therefore my bowels are moved with compassion upon him, and in abundance of mercy will I take pity of him. So much God attributed to this respect of being a father to Israel, and Ephraim, and of their being his children, that for this cause only notwithstanding their infinite and enormous sins, his bowels of endless mercy were moved with love and compassion towards them.

And these are the tender bowels of mercy, which holy Zachary, father to St. John Baptist, *Luke i.* protests to be in Almighty God towards mankind that had offended him. These are those entails of true and tender commiseration, which are in that good old father mentioned in the gospel, *Luke xvi.* who being not only offended, but also abandoned, by his younger son, yet after he saw him return home again, notwithstanding he had wasted all his goods and substance, and wearied out his body with his wicked life: he was so far from disdaining to receive him, that he came forth to meet him, fell upon his neck and kissed him for joy,

The father's liberal heart to the prodigal son.

adorned him with new apparel and rich jewels, provided a solemn banquet for him, invited his friends to be merry with him, and showed more joy for his return than if he had never departed from him.

By which parable, our Saviour *JESUS*, endeavoured to set forth unto us, the incomprehensible mercy of his heavenly father towards sinners ! in which respect he is truly called by his apostle, *2 Cor. i. Pater misericordiarum*, the father of mercies. Because as St. Bernard well notes,* this sea and ocean of mercies flows peculiarly from the heart of a father, which cannot be said so properly of the gulf and depth of his judgments. For which cause he is called in scripture, *Psalms xxxv. the God of justice and revenge*, and not the father. And finally, this blessed name of father does import to us by God's own testimony, all sweetness, all love, all friendship, all comfort, all fatherly providence, care, and protection, all certainty of favour, all assurance of grace, all security of mercy, pardon and remission of our sins, whensoever unfeignedly we turn unto him. And in this point his divine majesty is so forward and vehement in giving us assurance, that not being content to set forth his love for us, by the love of a father's heart, he goes further, and protests to us, that his heart is more tender towards us in this behalf, than the heart of any mother can be to the only child and infant of her own womb. For thus he says to Sion, when for her sins she began to doubt lest he had forsaken her. *Isaiah xlix.* 'Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb ? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee : behold, I have graven thee in my hands.' And thus much for God's being called our father.

What the name of Father does import.

There remains yet a third consideration, which sets forth God's inestimable love, more than any of the other foregoing demonstrations. And it is, that he gave the life and blood of his only begotten, and eternal son, for the purchasing and redeeming of us when we were lost. A price so infinite and inexplicable, that, without doubt his divine wisdom could never have given it, but for a thing which he had loved above all measure. Which our Saviour himself,

The third argument of God's love. The giving his son for us.

* Bern. ser. 1. de Nata.

that was to make the payment, does plainly signify, and therefore also seems, as it were, to wonder at such a bargain, when he says in the gospel: *John* iii. 'For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten son.' In which words, he ascribes this most wonderful dealing of his father, to the vehemency and exceeding abundance of love; as does also his dearest disciple and apostle St. John, saying; 1 *John* iv. By this hath appeared the charity of God in us, because God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. In this, I say, is made evident his exceeding charity; that we not loving him, he loved us first: and gave his own

*Christ
was given
for love.*

son to be a ransom for our sins. Whereunto also the holy apostle St. Paul agrees, admiring in like manner the excessive love of God in these words:

Rom. v. But God commendeth his charity towards us: because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us. And in another place framing, as it were, a measure of God's mercy by this abundance of his love, he says thus: *Ephes.* ii. But God, who is rich in mercy, through his exceeding charity with which he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved.) And hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That he might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of his grace, in his bounty towards us.

'This was the opinion of that noble apostle St. Paul, and of all his co-equals, apostles, evangelists, disciples, and saints; that this work of our redemption proceeded only from the inflamed furnace of God's immeasurable love.

And therefore, to make no other conclusion from hence, than that which St. Paul himself does make: *Rom.* viii. He that spared not even his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?

If when we were his enemies and thought not of him, he sent to seek us so diligently, by such a messenger whom he loved so dearly, allowing him to lay down a price for us which he so infinitely esteemed; what shall we think that he will do for us now, we being made his own by redemption, if we return willingly to him, when receiving us will cost him nothing else but only a merciful look upon us, which is not so much from the infinite bowels of h

bottomless mercy, as is one drop of water from the vast gulf of the main ocean ! And this shall suffice for this first point of God's love, declared to us by the three most sweet and comfortable names of creator, father, and redeemer.

SECT. II. *How God professes his love towards Sinners.*

NEXT to this, we are to consider in what manner God is accustomed to express and declare this love of his, in his dealings and proceedings, with sinners, for their conversion and salvation. And first of all, the wise men, having had long experience of this matter, be- *Two rare points of clemency in God.* gins to describe and set it forth in this sort, saying to God himself : *Sap. xi.* 'Thou overlook-
'est the sins of men for the sake of repentance.' And when they will not make profit of this his forbearance, but will needs force him to punish and correct them, he says, *Sap. xii.* 'And therefore thou chastisest them that err, by
'little and little ; and admonishest them, and speakest to
'them, concerning the things wherein they offend, that
'leaving wickedness they may believe in thee, O Lord.' These two points then of exceeding clemency, by the testimony of the wise man, are found in Almighty God. First to wink at the wicked life of men, and to expect their conversion, with unspeakable patience and longanimity, according as the prophet Isaiah bears witness, adjoining the cause thereof in these words : *Isa. xxx.* 'Therefore the Lord
'waiteth that he may have mercy on you : and therefore
'shall he be exalted, sparing you.' And secondly, for the same reason when he is forced by his justice to chastise them, yet he does it with such moderation and mildness, that he always reserves a place of pardon in this life.

And to these two we may adjoin a third property of his mercy, more admirable perhaps, than the former ; which is, as Tertullian excellently notes,* that he being the party offended, yet first, and principally desires reconciliation, he having received the wrong and injury yet does most earnestly entreat for amity and atonement. And whereas in all right and equity he might deny us pardon, and in his power take revenge of us at his pleasure ; yet he does not only offer us peace of his own accord, but also urges us by all means possible to accept of it, humbling, in a cer-

God that is offended seeks atonement with us.

* Tertul. in Apol. c. 2.

tain manner, his divine majesty and greatness, to our baseness and vileness, as though he had need of us, and behaving himself in this respect as a prince enamoured with his bonds slave and abject servant.

This might be declared by many of his own speeches and doings in holy scripture ; but one place out of the prophet Isaiah, *Isa.* xxvii. shall serve for all, where Almighty God shows such an earnest desire, of the conversion of Jerusalem, that no lover in the world could utter more signs and testimonies of a heart inflamed and set on fire with tender affection, than he does towards that city which so often and grievously had offended him. For first, after

*God's woo-
ing of Je-
rusalem.*

*His protes-
tation.*

*His hesi-
tation.*

*His chid-
ing.*

*His fair
speech.*

*His kind
speech.*

many threats poured out against her, if she did not return, lest she might perhaps fall into despair, he makes this protestation in the beginning of his speech. There is no indignation in me : but whatsoever I have spoken, I have spoken out of good-will and love. Secondly, he enters into this dispute and doubt with himself about punishing her sins. What shall I do ? shall I march against it, shall I set it on fire ? or rather shall it take hold of my strength, shall it make peace with me ? shall it (I say) make peace with me ? after which doubt and hesitation, he resolves with himself to change the manner of his style, and to fall a little to chide with her, and then says, *Isa.* xlii. Hear, ye deaf (inhabitants of Jerusalem) and ye blind behold that you may see. Who is blind, but my servant ? or deaf, but he to whom I have sent my messengers ? thou that hast ears open, wilt thou not hear ? And then, a little after, he begins to sooth and speak fair again, saying, *Isa.* xliii. Since thou camest honourable in my eyes, thou art glorious. I have loved thee ; and I will give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not, for I am with thee. Wherewith she being little or nothing moved, he turns to a sweet manner of complaint, saying, Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities. Which being said, and she somewhat won thereby to love him, as it seems, he turns to her with this most comfortable and kind speech : I am he that blot out thy iniquities for my own sake, and I will not remember thy sins.

All which being done, and God and she now reconciled, and made friends, his divine majesty begins a very loving conference, as it were, and sweet expostulation with her, saying in these words : Put me in remembrance (the things that are past) and let us plead together. Tell, if thou hast any thing to justify thyself. Thy first father sinned, &c. Whereat she being ashamed, and having nothing in the world to answer for herself, Almighty God comforts her, and makes up the whole matter in this most kind and amiable sort. Fear not, &c. for I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy stock. And they shall spring up among the herbs, as willows beside the running waters. Thus saith the Lord the king of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of Hosts ; I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no other God. Remember these things, O Jacob, I have blotted out thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist ; Return to me, for I have redeemed thee. Thus far continues the treaty between God and his city of Jerusalem.

His conference.

His sweet conclusion.

And now tell me, dear Christian, whether it be possible for any heart or tongue in this world to conceive or express more ways or significations of a most vehement good-will and burning affection, than has been declared by God in this treaty. What lover or enamoured person upon earth, what passionate heart could seek more earnestly, sue more diligently, solicit more artificially, complain more tenderly, expostulate more amiably, remit offences more readily, offer benefits more abundantly, conclude more sweetly, and give more pregnant testimonies of unfeigned love or more assured certainty of eternal league and amity, than Almighty God does to this nation, which had so grievously offended him ? who will not confess now with the prophet David ; *Psalm cxliv.* that 'The Lord is sweet to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.' Who will wonder if the same prophet resolves, *Psalm lxxxviii.* that his everlasting should be of the mercies of this his Lord and Maker.

A consideration upon the former treaty of God with Jerusalem.

But yet this thing is made much more apparent, by that which his divine majesty did afterwards to the same people in the days of Jeremiah the prophet, above a hundred years after this

God's tender—love to Jerusalem when he

was to destroy it.

this treaty, we spoke of in the time of Isaiah. For when God was resolved to destroy them and their city, for their obduracy in their sins; when the hour of execution drew near, his bowels of mercy were so touched with commiseration towards them, that he called to Jeremiah, and commanded him once again to go up to the temple gate, where all the people passed in and out, and there with a loud voice to cry as follows: *Jer. vii.* Hear ye the word of the Lord, all ye men of Juda, that enter in at these gates: thus saith the Lord of Hosts the God of Israel: Make your ways and your doings good: and I will dwell with you in this place, &c. And when this exhortation and endeavour of Almighty God, could not prevail with them, then his unspeakable goodness began with sharp threats in this manner: *Ibid.* My wrath and my indignation is enkindled against this place, upon men, and upon beasts, and upon the trees of the field, &c. The carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the air, and for the beasts of the earth, their enemies shall come and cast out of their sepulchres, the bones of the kings and princes of Juda; the bones of their priests, prophets, and inhabitants, and shall dry them in the sun, and cast them out upon the dunghill. After all which long and dreadful commination, he alters his speech presently again, and says in a lamentable voice, *Jer. viii.* Shall not he that falleth, rise again? and he that is turned away, shall not turn (to me) again? Why then is this people, &c. turned away with a stubborn revolting?

A pitiful complaint.

The wonderful proceedings of God with Jerusalem.

By which loving complaint, and infinite other means of mercy that God used with that people when no amendment at all could be procured; his divine majesty was forced to call Nebuchadonosor king of Babylon before the walls of Jerusalem, to destroy it. But even then also consider the bowels of his unspeakable mercy. For hoping that by this terror they might perchance be stirred up to a conversion; he sent Jeremiah the prophet to them again, with this embassy; *Jer. xxxv.* Go, &c. to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, &c. Will ye not receive instruction to obey my words? whereat that graceless people was so little moved, that they took Jeremiah and cast him into prison for his message, and thereby exasperated most grievously God's further indignation against them. Notwithstanding all which, his

incomprehensible clemency would not thus abandon them; but commanded holy Jeremiah, *Jer.* xxxvi. to write out all his threats and promises in a book together, and send them to them from the prison where he lay by his servant Baruch, to be read in their hearing; which was done. Whereupon Joachim the king commanded Baruch to be brought into his presence, and there to read the book by the fire-side, as the scripture notes. And when he had heard but three or four pages thereof, he cut them out with a penknife, and threw the whole book into the fire, and so consumed it. At which obstinate and impious dealing, although Almighty God was extremely offended; yet he commanded this same book to be written again, in much more ample manner than before, thereby, if possible, to have stirred up, and gained that people to him. But when this by no means could be brought to pass; then this divine majesty permitted the whole to be destroyed according to his former threat, and that rebellious people to be led away captive to Babylon; In which place and misery, notwithstanding their demerits, his infinite mercy could not forsake them, but sent his prophet Ezekiel, as also Baruch, to them with grievous complaints of their obduracy; yet offering them mercy and pardon, even then if they would repent.

The obstinacy of the Jewish nation.

And what more wonderful clemency than this can possibly be imagined, dear Christian? can any one in reason ever enter into doubt, or despair of God's mercy, how great and grievous soever the burden of his sins is, when he considers this proceeding of his eternal majesty with the people of Israel, for so many years and ages together; whom himself calls notwithstanding, *Ezek.* ii. an apostatising nation, of a shameless countenance and incorrigible disposition? can God devise any more effectual and forcible means, to erect and animate a sinner to return confidently unto him, than these are, and yet for our further comfort and encouragement in this behalf, I will add one thing more, which exceeds all reason and reach of human imagination; which is, that God promises a sinner that faithfully returns to him, not only to forget and utterly extinguish all memory of his former iniquities; but also to rejoice and triumph more at his conversion, and to love and

An epithet given by God to the people of Israel.

A wonderful point.

cherish him more tenderly at his return, than if he had never fallen or departed from his service.

What joy there is made at a sinners conversion. This God himself signifies by the prophet Isaiah, when he says: *Isa. xl.* Call unto Jerusalem, speak unto her heart, that is, comfortably, because her iniquity is forgiven; she has received double at God's hand for all her sins committed. And more plainly in another place by the same prophet; *Isa. xxx.* 'The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord shall bind up the wound of his people, and shall heal the stroke of their wound.' And to this purpose are these most powerful parables of our Saviour in the gospel, as for example, *Luke xv.* the extraordinary joy and feasting, the careful woman had made, when she found her goat that was lost, and the good shepherd, when he brought back the sheep that went astray; and the merciful father, when he received his son home, that before had abandoned him. And it is to this purpose that in the prophet David, *Psalms lvi.* God glories especially in the service of those people that before had not known him. And this shall suffice for this second point, to show, what wonderful means Almighty God does use, in setting forth his mercy to allure sinners to repentance.

SECT. III.—*What assurance of pardon God gives to them that repent and return to him.*

HAVING declared what exceeding great love and mercy God bears towards man, and how effectually he expresses the same by his inviting sinners to their conversion: it follows, that we should in this third place examine somewhat more in particular, what certain assurance his divine majesty gives of undoubted pardon and full remission of their sins, to all such as unfeignedly resolve to make their recourse to him. Which although every man, by what we have said before, may sufficiently conceive, yet because of the importance of the matter, it will not be amiss in this place also to add a word or two, for a more plain and evident demonstration thereof. And this I will do by showing, what God Almighty has said and done, pro-

mised and performed, as to this point, in regard to such as have offended him.

And as to the first, which are his promises: it is most apparent, as well by the things which before has been discussed, as also by the whole course, body and drift of holy scripture, that the promises of mercy and pardon which his divine majesty has made to sinners, whereunto by his sacred word he has, in a certain manner, obliged himself, are both manifold, vehement, absolute, and universal: Whosoever shall depart from his wicked ways, and turn unto me says Almighty God, *Ezek. xvii.* I will receive him. Behold the universality of all people and persons, without excluding any. And again: at what day soever an impious man shall return to me from his impiety, his wickedness shall not hurt him, says the same Lord God of Hosts; see the universality of all times and seasons, without exception, But yet hearken what God still adds: *Isa. i.* 'Cease to do perversly? says he to the Jews, &c. 'And then come and accuse me, saith the Lord. If your 'sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow, ' &c. Consider how universally he speaks of all kind of sins; be they never so grievous, so horrible, or heinous. And finally, God, talking to a soul that has oftentimes fallen, and most infinitely offended him, he says thus. *Jer. iii.* 'It is commonly said: if a man put away his wife, and 'she go from him, and marry another man, shall he return 'to her any more? shall not that woman be polluted and 'defiled? But thou hast prostituted thyself to many lovers; 'nevertheless return to me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee.'

The promises of God to sinners that repent.

Which words contain all states, qualities, and conditions of men, how many ways, or how contemptuously soever, they have sinned against his divine majesty. And what can be added to this? was there ever a prince that made so large an offer to his subjects? or was there ever a father that gave so ample, and universal a promise of pardon to his children? Who can mistrust himself to be excluded from this assurance of mercy, wherein all sorts of people, all kind of sins, and times and seasons, all states and qualities of sinners are comprehended? O most miserable and unfortunate man who excludes himself, whom God does

The promise of pardon extends to all repenting sinners.

not exclude ! What is there in this general and universal promise wherein any man in the world can pretend to make the least doubt or question ? he can not doubt of the meaning, and intention of him that promises, his intention is only love and charity, and consequently he cannot deceive us. He cannot doubt of the truth and surety of his promises, it is infallible, and more certain than heaven and earth put together. He cannot doubt of the power that he has to perform his promise ; it is infinite, and not restrained by any bounds or limitation. Of what then can we doubt ? or in which of these points ought we not to find a most singular comfort ? Hear the comfortable meditation that blessed St. Bernard* made upon these three particulars which we have now mentioned. ‘ Consider three things, says this holy man, where-
 ‘ in all my hope consists, and whereby it is made invinci-
 ‘ ble. First, the exceeding love and charity of him that calls
 ‘ me to him by repentance ; secondly, the infallible truth
 ‘ and certainty of the promise he makes to me of pardon
 ‘ and mercy ; thirdly, the endless power and ability he has
 ‘ to perform whatsoever he promises. This is that triple
 ‘ or three-fold cord and chain which holy scripture says is
 ‘ hardly broken ; for that by this chord, let down unto us
 ‘ from heaven which is our country, into this world, which
 ‘ is our prison, we may ascend and mount up, if we will,
 ‘ even unto the sight and possession of God’s eternal king-
 ‘ dom and heavenly glory. Thus far that blessed father.

*How God
 has per-
 formed his
 promises to
 sinners
 that have
 repented.*

But now as to the second point : if we consider how faithfully Almighty God has put in execution these promises of his from time to time, and how no one upon earth, though the world has continued so many ages, was ever yet frustrated of his hope, when he returned to his divine majesty, if he return from his heart ; we shall find still greater reason of comfort. Because it is not probable, or to be imagined, that he who never failed in times past, will break his promise for the time to come ; especially seeing that now, as Christians, we have this advantage above former times, as St John also notes, 1 John ii, that he, who was and is our judge, is become also our patron and advocate to plead our cause.

* Bern. Serm. in ver. Psal, Misericordias domini in ætern. cantabi.

Let us cast back our eyes then and take a view of all ages, times, and seasons past and gone. Let us begin from the first creation of the world ; and come downwards even unto this day, and examine indifferently, whether in all this wide compass of times, persons, places, and most grievous offences committed against his divine majesty, there was ever yet any one sinner, upon earth, that truly returned and was not received. The sin of our first parents was presently forgiven them, upon their first signification of their grief and sorrow for the same. And moreover our Saviour *JESUS CHRIST* was promised as a Messias to restore them and their posterity to the glory and felicity which by their fall they had lost. After this, to the time of Abraham, and of the people of Israel, as some works of God's justice that were exercised upon irrepentant offenders, are recorded in holy writ ; so there are many more celebrated of his mercy : And only two or three persons in particular are mentioned, who, notwithstanding some sorrow which they seemed to have of their offences, were rejected. The first was the murderer Cain, who at the beginning denied his wickedness to God, and then, being convicted despaired of pardon. The second was Esau, whom St. Paul calls *Heb. xii.* a profane fornicator, who found no place of repentance, though with tears he sought it. Whereof St. Chrysostom, gives the reason in these words : * Esau obtained not pardon, because he did not repent as he should have done, his tears proceeding rather out of anger and temptation, than out of true sorrow ;' the third was Judas, in the New Testament, who made show of sorrow and some repentance, but it was not true, as proceeding from despair. Wherefore let us look upon them that repented truly indeed.

Never sinner repented that was not pardoned.

The rejection of Cain, Esau, and Judas.

When the people of Israel came to be a distinct nation, and governed by God's appointment, how grievously did they offend his divine majesty daily, and almost hourly ? and how graciously did he remit and pardon their manifold innumerable sins and trespasses done against him ? the whole scripture seems to be nothing else but a perpetual narration of God's incredible patience, and infinite mer-

* Chrysost. Hom. 80 de pœnit. ad pop. Anti..

cies towards them. And if I would speak of particular persons among them, who he received to his favour after great and manifold offences committed, there would be no end. Let Manasses, that most impious and wicked king be an example for all, with whose enormous life, and most detestable acts, whole pages are filled, both in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and yet afterwards, the same man falling into misery and calamity among the Babylonians, (a fortune school oftentimes for princes, who in their prosperity condemn all admonishments) he began to be sorrowful for his former life and actions, and to do great penance, as the scripture says,* in the sight of God for the same. Whereat his divine and incomprehensible mercy was so much moved, that he received him to favour, and brought him back from his prison and fetters, to his kingdom and imperial throne of majesty again.

The example of the Ninivites.

The example also of the Ninivites is very notable and singular in this behalf; against whom God Almighty having decreed a sentence of death to be executed within a certain time; he commanded Jonas the prophet to go and denounce that sentence to them. But Jonas well knowing the nature and disposition of God towards mercy, foresaw, as afterwards he signifies, that if he should go upon that embassy to them, and they thereupon make change of their lives; God would presently pardon them, and so he should be taken for a false and lying prophet. He therefore chose rather to fly away by sea, to the city of Tharsis, and there to hide himself. But Almighty God raised a tempest in that journey, and disposed things so, that Jonas was cast into the sea, there received and devoured by a whale, from whose belly he was commanded afterwards to repair to Ninive, and to do his former message, which he performed. The tenor of which was, that within forty days that great city of Ninive should be destroyed. Which he having denounced to them, the sequel fell out, as Jonas before had suspected. For the Ninivites believing the message, and betaking themselves to repentance, God forgave them presently; whereat Jonas was exceedingly grieved

and offended, and complained sweetly to God of his strange dealing herein, demanding why he had forced him to come and preach destruction to them, knowing beforehand, that he would pardon them. But God answered him fully to this point, in a manner that Jonas was not able to reply one word.

For Jonas sitting without the walls of Ninive, under an ivy bush, that in one night by God's appointment was sprung up to cover him from the sun; the same ivy by God's order perished upon the sudden, and was consumed by a worm, leaving the prophet destitute of the comfort he received by that shade. Wherewith he being not a little disquieted and afflicted; God said unto him: *Jonas iv.*

Thou, Jonas art grieved for the ivy, for which thou hast not laboured, nor made it grow, which in one night, came up, and in one night perished. Shall not I then be careful to pardon my great city of Ninive, wherein there are above a hundred

*Consider
this speech
of Al-
mighty
God.*

and twenty thousand innocent people, who cannot distinguish between the right and left hand? this was the answer from Almighty God to Jonas, showing his singular inclination to mercy, because that the Ninivites were his own workmanship and labour of his own hands, as other people also are. Of which reason for his so mercifully dealing with us, we have spoke before, in the first part of this chapter, and in confirmation of what was there said, alledged these examples out of the old Testament.

But if we look into the time of grace, when God incarnate came himself in person, to show the riches of his endless mercy unto mortal men upon earth: we shall see more examples without comparison, of this exceeding clemency. For then our creator and shepherd overcome, as it were, with extreme compassion, came down into this vale of misery, with resolution not only to offer pardon and forgiveness to all his sheep that were astray, and would return; but also to follow and see them out; and being found, to lay them on his own shoulders, and so to carry them back unto the fold again, and there to give his life and blood for their defence against the wolf. O sweet Lord! what greater love can be imagined than this? what more pregnant signification of inflamed charity can man's heart conceive or apprehend? can it seem strange now if he who

*Example
of mercy
in the new
testament.*

descended unto us with this heart, and with these bowels of burning affection, did set open the gates of all his treasures, favours and graces unto us? can we wonder if the holy apostle St. Paul say of this time: *Rom. v.* that they over abound. And in another place, *Titus ii.* that the grace of our Saviour has appeared to all men.

The wonderful clemency of Jesus, our Saviour.

Hence it proceeds that this delight and pleasure upon earth, was to converse with sinners, and to give them comfort, courage, and confidence in him. Which he did so manifestly in the sight of all the world, that he thereby offended the scribes and pharisees, and other principal rulers among the Jewish nation. Hence also proceeds his so movingly inviting wicked men to have access to him. As for example, when he cried out in public: *Mat. xi.* ‘Come to me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.’ And at another time, going into the temple of Jerusalem upon a high festival day, when all the people were gathered together: he stood up in the midst of them all, and broke forth into this vehement invitation, with a loud voice, as St. John Evangelist records: *John vii.* ‘If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink’ Hence it came to pass, that his divine majesty was called a friend of publicans and sinners. And hence it proceeded, that he received all, embraced all, and forgave all that repaired to him, were they scribes, pharisees, soldiers, publicans, usurers, harlots, thieves, persecutors, or whatsoever most grievous offenders (whereof particular examples in each kind might be alledged :) assuring us also, that after his resurrection, and blessed ascension to the right hand of his father, he would be more bountiful yet in this manner of proceeding, *and draw all unto himself*, he being both our Judge and Advocate, our King and Mediator, our God and Redeemer, our Father and Brother, our Priest and Sacrifice and he who both pleads, and determines our cause at the same time.

Great and many causes of hope.

What then may we not hope at the hand of this our Lord and Master, who has left such words, such deeds, such evidences of his infallible love and abundant mercies towards us why should not his dealings with other men before us, give us heart and courage to confide in him, for the time present, and to come? why should not his former infinite sweet

mercies be so many odoriferous, and fragrant savours and ointments, to make us, as they did the spouse of the Canticles, *Cant. i. follow and run after him?* hear what devout St. Bernard meditates* upon this passage of Christ's fragrant ointments. 'O sweet *JESUS*, says he, the fresh and odoriferous smell of your wonderful clemency, allures us to run after you, when we hear you say, you despise not beggars, nor abhor sinners. We know right well, O Lord, that you rejected not the thief that confessed you: nor the sinful woman that wept upon you; nor the Cananean that humbled himself before you; nor the wicked adulteress brought to you: nor the tribute gatherer that followed you; nor the publican that repaired to you; nor the disciple that denied you; nor Saul that did persecute you, nor the tormentors that nailed your sacred body to the cross. O Lord, all these are fragrant smells and savours of your most sweet mercy; and at the scent of these your ointments, we do follow and run after you.' Thus far St. Bernard.

SECT. IV.—*Containing the application of all that has been said.*

To come then to the fourth and last part of this chapter, and to apply all that has been said of God's mercy to our present purpose, what man is there who reading and believing these things, can doubt or mistrust of pardon for his sins? *If God be for us, who is against us?—God that justifies, who is he that shall condemn us?* says the holy apostle St. Paul, *Rom. vii.* If God has a mind to deliver us, who can take us out of his hands? if God protests that he will pardon us, why should we doubt or question it? Why should not we join rather with that confident and faithful servant of his, St. Paul, who says to us, and all other sinners in his master's name: *Heb. xx.* Let us repair unto him with a true heart, in fulness of faith, having purged our hearts from an evil conscience: let us hold fast an immoveable confession of our hope, seeing he is faithful who has given us his promise, and let us consider how one of us may provoke another to charity and good works. By which words the holy apostle signifies, that what sinner

* Bern. Sermon. 22. in Cant.

soever will resolve with himself to purge his conscience from wickedness for the time to come, and to employ the rest of his life in charity and good works, he may confidently and boldly repair to God, with most certain assurance of receiving pardon and remission. And alas, why then should any man despair? wherefore should any one cast away his own soul, that God so much desires to save? what a lamentable case is it, to behold so many Christians languishing in their sins, and giving themselves over to all kind of carelessness, and dissolute sensuality, upon this sad imagination, that now they are gone so far, and so deeply rooted and habituated in this kind of life, that either it is impossible, or in vain for them to think of change or amendment? O let these men hearken to this excellent discourse of holy Chrysostom, who speaks thus.*

An excellent discourse and exhortation of St. Chrysostom.

‘If you are a wicked man says he, think of the publican; if unclean of life, consider the harlot: if a murderer, remember the thief, if a swearer, call to mind the blasphemer. Cast your eyes upon Saul or Paul, first a persecutor, and then a preacher; first a violent robber, afterwards a good steward and dispenser; first chaff, afterwards good corn; first a wolf, afterwards a shepherd; first lead, afterwards gold; first a disperser, afterwards a gatherer; first a breaker down of God’s vineyard, afterwards a planter; first a destroyer, afterwards a builder. Thou hast seen many wickednesses, but behold unspeakable mercy. Thou hast heard the pride of the servant, consider now the love and clemency of the master. I will not have you tell me, I am a blasphemer, I have been a persecutor, I have led an unclean and abominable life, and therefore I deserve I shall not have pardon; say not so to me, for here thou hast examples to the contrary, in every one of these and many other sins. Thou mayest safely fly to what refuge thou wilt, and that in either in the old or new Testament. For in the old thou hast David, in the new thou hast Paul. I will not have thee therefore alledge excuses to cover thy own cowardice. Hast thou sinned? do penance. Hast thou sinned a thousand times? repent sincerely a thousand times. This is

* Hom 2 in Psal 50.

the only ointment that may be poured into a wounded conscience, the torment whereof I well know. For the devil stands by, sharpening the sword of despair, and saying: thou hast lived wickedly all thy youth, and in all thy former years thou hast haunted plays and spectacles with thy companions, and hast followed loose and lascivious women; thou hast taken other mens goods from them wrongfully; thou hast been covetous, dissolute, and effeminate; thou hast blasphemed, and committed many other heinous and enormous crimes; and therefore what hope canst thou have of salvation? truly none at all. Thou art a mere cast-away, and canst not now go back; and therefore my counsel is, that now thou use the pleasures and commodities of this world, and pass over thy time in mirth of heart, without any thought of other affairs for the present, &c.' Hitherto are St. Chrysostom's words, uttering the despair of sinners, and the devil's counsel unto them. But let us hear his answer which thus immediately follows in the same homily.

These are the words of the devil, says he. These are the counsels and persuasions of our enemy. But mine are quite contrary. If thou hast fallen, thou mayest rise again; if thou hast been a lost companion, yet thou mayest be saved; if thou hast committed fornication, and adultery in time past, thou mayest be continent for the time to come; if thou hast haunted plays and games, thou mayest draw back thy foot from henceforth; if thou hast delighted in lewd and evil company, thou mayest hereafter acquaint thyself with good. Thou hast free-will to choose either part. This only is necessary to begin thy conversion out of hand, and repent and take in hand to reform thyself, though it be at first but a little. Let thy eyes begin but to shed one tear, enter into thy conscience, consider thyself but indifferently, examine thy actions and what they deserve, lay before thy face the day of judgment, with the torments of hell on the one side, and the joys of heaven on the other; repent, confess, amend thy life, seek a medicine for thy wound out of hand, whilst thou art in this life, in what state or condition soever thou art; yea, if, upon thy death bed, ready to breath out thy soul and spirit: fear not to repent, for God's mercy is not

St. Chrysostom's counsel against the devil's temptations.

No time too late to repent.

‘restrained by the shortness of time. Which I say to you, my dear brethren, not to make you thereby the more negligent, but only to stir you up to confidence in God’s mercy and thereby to avoid the most dangerous gulf of despair. Hitherto this holy and learned father.

In which long discourse of his, we are to note, that (together with the excellent encouragement which he gives to all sinners of what state and condition soever they are, in all times and seasons, to confide in God’s mercy, and never to despair) he also gives a wholesome admonition, that we should not by this confidence become more negligent in reforming our lives; but rather do it out hand, without delay

or procrastination. Whereunto, in like manner the holy father St. Augustine in a like exhortation against despair, endeavours most vehemently to stir up in these words.* ‘Let no man says he, after a hundred sins, nor after a thousand, despair of God’s mercy; but yet so let him not despair, as to seek presently without all stay, to reconcile himself to God by amendment of life, lest perhaps after that, by custom, he has got a habit of sin, he be not able to deliver himself from the snares of the devil, although he would, &c. So he.

And in the very same sermon, the same doctor discourses yet more at large upon the same matter: as follows, ‘Not every man that has sinned, but he that perseveres in sin, is hateful and abominable in the sight of God. Because no man must diffide of God’s mercy towards him that will amend and leave his sins. For God himself as a most sweet comforter has said by his prophet, *Ezek. xi.* ‘That the impiety of a wicked man shall not hurt him, in what day soever he shall turn from the same.’ But yet this great mercy of our Lord, is then only profitable to us when we delay not our conversion, nor multiply sins upon sins. Which I will declare to you by the example of wounds and ruptures of our body, by which the in-

firmities also of our mind and soul may be conceived. Thus then we see, if a man’s foot, leg, or arm be broken, with how great pain the same is restored to its accustomed strength again. But if any member of our body be broken twice, or three times, or oftener in one and the self same place, your charity can imagine,

An exhortation and admonition of St. Augustine.

A similitude of the body to express the misery of the soul by multiplying sin.

‘ how hard a thing it would be for that part to recover perfect health again. So fares it, dear brethren, in the wounds and ruptures of our soul. If a man commits a sin once or twice, and unfeignedly, without dissimulation, has recourse to the medicine of penance, out of hand he obtains health again, and that sometimes without any scar or mark of the past disease. But if he begins to add sins upon sins, so that the wounds of his soul rather putrify within him, by covering and defending them, than heal by repentance and confession; it is to be feared, lest that heavy speech of the apostle be fulfilled in him, to whom he says : *Rom. ii.* Dost thou not know, that the benignity of God is used to bring thee to repentance ? but thou by thy obdurate and impenitent heart, dost heap to thyself wrath in the day of the vengeance, of revelation of God’s judgment.’ Thus far St. Augustine.

And now, dear Christian, what can be spoken more effectual, either to raise our hope and confidence in God’s mercy, or to terrify us from presumption in delaying our amendment, than what has been uttered here by these noble pillars, and fathers of Christ’s Church, and most excellent instruments and temples of his holy spirit ? The divine wisdom of Almighty God in a certain place says : *Eccle. xii.* That the words of wise men ought to be spurs to us, and as it were nails driven into the depths of our hearts ; meaning thereby that we should be stirred up and most vehemently moved, when we hear such wise men as the Holy Ghost there means, (which indeed are only they that have the knowledge and true fear of God) make such exhortations unto us, and give us such wholesome admonitions as these godly fathers in this great affair has done. And how is it then, dear brother, that we are nothing stirred up thereby, nothing quickened, nothing awakened ? I will conclude this whole chapter and treatise, with another exhortation and admonition of St. Augustine :* for besides the grave authority of the man, which ought to move us much, I think nothing can be spoken more excellently, or more agreeing to our present purpose.

*Godly
men’s
words
ought to
move us
greatly.*

* Serm. 181 de Temp. cap. 16.

*A notable
discourse
of St.
Augustine
touching
our con-
version.*

Almighty God, says he, never despises the repentance of any man, if it be offered him sincerely: nay, he accepts the same most willingly, embraces the penitent, and endeavours to reduce him to his former state wherein he was before he fell. And that which is yet more, if a man be not able to fulfil the whole order of his satisfaction, yet God does not refuse the least penance that is, though it be done in ever so short a space. Neither does he suffer the reward to perish of any little conversion. And this the prophet Isaiah seems to me to signify, when he says in God's person to the people of Israel. *For a moment, a little while have I forsaken thee. In a moment of indignation have I hid my face a little while from thee, and in mercy everlasting, have I had mercy on thee, said the Redeemer our Lord.* Having these examples of penance, dear brethren, before our eyes, let us not persevere in our wickedness, nor despair of reconciliation; but rather let us say with a confident heart, we will return home to our father, and present ourselves to our God. For truly, my brethren, he will never turn away from the man, that turns to him. He himself has said, that he is a God that draws near unto us, were it not that our sins make a separation between him and us. Let us then take away the separation, and obstacle, and so nothing will hinder our conjunction with him, which he greatly desires. For to this end did he create us, that he might bestow upon us eternal bliss in his kingdom of heaven. He did not

*Hell not
made for
man.*

make us for hell, but he made his kingdom for us, and hell for the devil.' So he says in the gospel. *Matt. xxv.* 'Come ye blessed of my father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world; and to the damned, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.'

'If then hell-fire was prepared for the devil, and the kingdom of heaven for man, from the beginning of the world, it remains only, that we take care not to lose our inheritance by persisting in sin. As long as we are in this life, how many or great soever our sins may be, it is possible to wash them away by penance; but when we shall be once

*In this
life all
penance
is avail-*

‘ departed from this world, although then we re-
 ‘ pent, as no doubt but we shall from the bottom
 ‘ of our hearts, yet it will avail us nothing. And although
 ‘ our teeth do gnash, our mouth cry out, our eyes gush forth
 ‘ into tears, and our hearts lament with innumerable com-
 ‘ plaints and supplications, yet no man will hear us, no
 ‘ man assist us, nor so much as with the tip of his fin,
 ‘ give us a drop of water to cool our tongue amidst our tor-
 ‘ ments ; but we shall receive that lamentable answer which
 ‘ the rich glutton received from the mouth of Abraham
 ‘ there is between us and you a great distance, so that none
 ‘ may pass from us to you, nor from you to us.’ Hitherto
 lasts St. Augustine’s exhortation, which being so full as it
 is, and directly to our purpose against despair of God’s
 mercies, and the other extreme, delay of our amendment,
 upon presumption or negligences ; I shall not need to add
 any thing to it at all, but end this first chapter with it.

CHAPTER II.

The second hindrance of resolution, which are certain pretended difficulties of the hardness and asperity of a virtuous life : the fallacy whereof is discovered, and the manifold helps that make the same most easy, sweet and pleasant, declared.

SECT. I. *That the way of virtue is not so hard as sinners generally apprehend.*

THE everlasting and irreconcilable enemy of our heavenly bliss and salvation having received by the former reasons and considerations of God’s infinite goodness, a very strong encounter and contradiction against his first and greatest assault of despair (himself also being forced to confess, though with endless grief and envy, that the mercy of Almighty God is without measure towards man) he retires himself back many times from the pursuit of that point (in such especially as have yet some time to live in this world, and seem not to be near their last days) and undertakes to persuade such sinners as he cannot bring to despair, at least to stand off and keep themselves from all resolution to put in use and fulfil the precepts of a Christian life, because they are hard, unsavoury, painful, and

Two assaults of our ghostly enemy.

troublesome; full of melancholy and sadness; void of comfort and recreation? opposite to all mirth, content and joy; subject to continual affliction and vexation of mind; and finally, not supportable to such bodies, such minds, such education, such customs, such course of life as their's are.

This is an ordinary slight and stratagem of our adversary, which he makes so plausible, flattering our sensuality, that most men of the world receive this persuasion for sound counsel and perfect wisdom; esteeming all those either simple or sottish, or at least far inferior in judgment, and discretion to themselves, that embrace or persuade the contrary. By which means it comes to pass, that the fear of difficulties in a virtuous life is a very great, strong, ordinary, and universal impediment, which hinders infinite souls from embracing the means of their salvation, consequently not to be passed over in this place, without a full examination and perfect answer.

First then, although we should suppose that the way of virtue was so hard indeed, as the enemy would make it seem, yet I might well say with St. John Chrysostom,* that seeing the reward is so great and infinite, as before we have declared, no labour should seem great for the gaining thereof. Again, I might say with holy St. Augustine,† that seeing we daily take so great pains in this world to avoid lesser inconveniences, as of sickness, imprisonment, loss of goods and life, and the like; what pains should we refuse for the avoiding the eternity of hell-fire the torment of which is insupportable? the first of these considerations St. Paul used when he said, *Rom. viii.* The sufferings of this life are not worthy of the glory which shall be revealed in the next. The second, St. Peter used when he writ, That seeing the heavens must be dissolved and Christ come in judgment to restore to every man according to his works, what manner of men ought we to be in all holy conversation? as if he would say, no labour, no pains, no penance ought to seem hard or great to us, to avoid the terror of that dreadful day. St. Augustine demands this question, What do we think the rich glutton in hell

If a virtuous life were hard yet worthy our labour.

* Lib. de compunct. † Hom. 26, 59.

would do now to avoid his torments if he were in this life again? would he take pains or no? would he bestir himself rather than return into that place of calamity again? I think he would, and that after another manner from what he did when he was here. I might add to this the infinite pains that Christ took for us: the infinite benefits he has bestowed upon us; the infinite sins we have committed against him; the infinite examples of saints that have trod this path before us, though some of them perhaps were of a more delicate constitution of body than we are. In respect of all which points well considered, we ought not to boggle at a little pains and labour though it were true, that God's service were as troublesome as many do esteem it, and as the devil represents it to us.

But now in reality there is nothing of this, and this is but a subtle deceit of the enemy for our discouragement. The testimony of Christ himself is clear in this point, saying, *Matt. xii. Jugum meum suave est, & onus meum leve*: 'My yoke is sweet' and my burden light.' And his dearly beloved disciple, St. John, says plainly, *1 John v. ejus gravia non sunt*: 'His commandments are not grievous.' What is the reason why so many men think there is such an insupportable difficulty in this affair? surely one is, besides the fallacy of the devil, which is the chief, that men feel the disease of concupiscence in their bodies, but do not consider the strength of the medicine given us against the same: they cry out with St. Paul, *Rom. vii.* that they find a law in their members, repugning to the law of their mind; (which is the rebellion of concupiscence left in our flesh by original sin) but they confess not, or consider not with the same apostle, *ibid.* That the grace of God, by Jesus Christ shall deliver them from the same. They remember not the comfortable saying, of our Saviour to St. Paul, in the midst of his greatest temptation: *Sufficit tibi gratia mea*. My grace is sufficient to strengthen thee against them all. Those men I say, do as Eliseus's disciples did, *4 Reg. v.* who casting his eye only upon the number of his enemies, that is, upon the huge army of the Syrians, ready to assault him, thought himself lost and utterly unable to stand in their sight, till by the prayers of his master, the holy prophet, he was permitted by God to see

The way of virtue is not hard indeed.

Man-data.

The cause of pretended difficulties.

the angels that stood there present to fight on his side, and then he well perceived that his party was the stronger.

So it fares with weak and distrustful people, who feeling and considering only the miseries and infirmities of their own nature, account the battle painful, and the victory impossible; having not tasted indeed, nor ever, through their own fault and negligence, experienced the manifold helps of heavenly and spiritual succours, which

Almighty God never fails to send such as are content to undertake the conflict for his sake. St. Paul who had experienced that aid, having reckoned up all the hardest encounters and impediments that could occur, says notwithstanding: *Rom. viii.* ‘But in all those things we overcome, because of him that hath loved us.’ And then he makes that most wonderful protestation whereof both heaven, earth, and hell may stand in admiration: that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor any other power should be able to separate him from Christ, or to make him abandon his service: and all this upon the confidence of that spiritual aid from his Saviour, in virtue of which he affirms: *Phil. iv.* That he could do all things, without exception. The prophet David, also had experienced the force of his assistance, when he said: *Psalm cxviii.* ‘I have run the way of thy commandments when thou didst enlarge my heart.’ This dilation of heart was by spiritual consolation of internal attraction, whereby a man’s heart, straitened by anguish and sorrow, is opened and dilated, when God’s holy grace is poured into it. So that he who without God’s assistance is able to do nothing, with the aid thereof, is made able to conquer and overcome all difficulties.

I would gladly ask those men who imagine the way of God’s holy law to be so hard and full of difficulty; how that holy prophet could say, *Psalm cxviii.* ‘I have been delighted in the way of thy testimonies, as in all riches?’ And in another place; ‘That the judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves, to be desired above gold, and much precious stone; and more sweet than honey, or the honey-comb!’ by which words he gives a virtuous life not only due estimation of honour and value above all treasure in the world; but also of pleasure, delight, and sweetness; thereby to confound all those that abandon and

forsake the same, upon idle, pretended, and unfeigned difficulties. And if king David could say thus much in the old testament, and of the old law, (which is infinitely more hard than is the new,) with how much more reason may we speak it now in the time of grace, when not only the service of God in itself, is without all comparison more sweet and easy; but also the peculiar helps and assistances of Almighty God, are much more effectual and abundant.

To make this more evident, I would demand of thee, poor unfortunate Christian,* that deceivest thyself with these appearances of imaginary difficulties, why Christ our Saviour came into this world? why he took our flesh upon him, why he laboured and took so much pains among us? why he shed his blood? why he prayed to his father so often for us? why he appointed the sacraments as conduits, to communicate his most holy grace unto us? why he sent the Holy Ghost into the world? what signified gospel or good tidings? what mean the words, grace and mercy, brought with him? what imports the comfortable name of *JESUS*? is not all this to deliver us from sin? from sin past, by his death? from sin present and to come, by the same death, and the assistance of his grace bestowed on us more abundantly than before? was not this one of the principal effects of Christ's coming, as the prophet noted; *Isa. xl.* That crooked paths should be made straight? was not this the cause, why he endowed his Church with the seven blessed gifts of the Holy Ghost, and with the infused virtues, to make the yoke of his service sweet, the exercise of a good life easy, the walking in his commandments pleasant, so that men might now sing in tribulations, have confidence in perils, security in afflictions, and assurance of victory in all temptations? is not this the beginning, middle, and end of the gospel? were not these the promises of the prophets, the tidings of the evangelists, the preachings of the apostles, the doctrine, belief, and practice of all saints; and finally, is not this *Verbum abbreviatum*, *Isa. x.* the word of God abbreviated, or made short, wherein do consist all the riches and treasures of our Christian profession.

But because the matter is of exceeding great weight to the strengthening of Christians in their vocation, against the temptations of pusillanimity and dejection, which are very ordinary and dan-

*The end of
Christ's
coming to
make the
way easy.*

*The sum
of this
chapter,
with th*

two general parts thereof.

gerous to most men in the world, it will not be amiss to treat and discuss the same more at large in this place, laying down the particular means and helps which every man has, or may have in this concern, if he want not will to use and apply the same to his assistance and advantage. And because the field is large, and the matters are many which appertain to this point, I have thought convenient for more plainness and perspicuity of the reader, to reduce the whole sum to two general heads and parts. In the first whereof, I will show the manifold and sundry helps that Almighty God does lend to men for the facilitating the way of his holy commandments; and in the second, I will lay down certain instructions, admonitions, and examples, how to make our advantage of the helps that are lent us.

SECT. II. *Of the helps that are given to Christians to make a virtuous life easy.*

The infinite helps and comforts of a soul resolved to serve God.

IT would be a very hard and difficult matter for any one to take upon him to set forth all the particular ways and means whereby our most merciful Lord and Saviour does comfort, strengthen, and cherish the soul that resolves to live faithfully in his service. These are infinite secrets that do pass between them, infinite privy tokens and significations of love, that none else can express or conceive; but as to those public and ordinary ways, whereby it is evident in holy writ, that Almighty God is accustomed to work this effect of making his commandments sweet and easy; I shall here recount the chief and principal, for our common consolation and encouragement.

First of all, we must reckon in this number, the infusion of God's most holy and precious grace into our minds and souls, whereby they are beautified and strengthened against all difficulties and temptations, as St. Paul was, 2 Cor. xii. against the tribulations and temptations of the flesh. And this grace is of such efficacy and force in the soul where it once enters, that it alters the whole state thereof, making those things clear, which were obscure before; those things pleasant, which were bitter before; those things easy, which were difficult before. And for this cause also, it is said in scripture, that it makes a new spirit, and a new heart,

where it is bestowed by Almighty God ; which his divine majesty signifies by the prophet Ezekiel, in these words when he treats of the graces that should be given at the coming of Christ in flesh : *Ezek. xi.* ‘ I will give them ‘ one heart, and I will put a new spirit in their bowels, ‘ that they may walk in my commandments, and keep my ‘ judgments and do them.’ What can be spoken more effectually of the power of God’s holy grace, enabling us to the performance of good works.

In like manner concerning the force and efficacy of the same grace to resist, mortify, and conquer the passions of our flesh and sensuality, which by their rebellion against virtue, make the way of God’s commandments unpleasant. St. Paul writes thus to the Romans. *Rom. vi.* ‘ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that ‘ the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve ‘ sin no longer.’ In which words, by *the old man*, and *the body of sin*, St. Paul understands our rebellious appetite and concupiscence which is so crucified and destroyed by the most noble sacrifice of Christ our Saviour ;* that we may, by the grace purchased unto us, in that holy sacrifice, resist and conquer this appetite, and so keep ourselves from the servitude of sin : that is, from any consent to mortal sin, if we will ourselves. And this is that noble and entire victory which God promised so long ago to every Christian soul by the means of Christ, when he said, *Isa. xli.* ‘ Fear not for I am with thee : turn not aside, for I am thy God : I have strengthened thee, and have helped thee : and the right hand of my just One hath upheld thee. Behold all that fight against thee, shall be confounded and ashamed ; thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find, the men that resist thee : ‘ they shall be as nothing, for I am the Lord thy God.

*The force
of grace
in resist-
ing temptations.*

Behold here a full victory promised over our rebels, by the help of the right hand of God’s just man ; that is, a full conquest over our disordinate passions and temptations, by the aid of the grace of *JESUS CHRIST*. And although it is not here promised that these rebels will be taken

*A simi-
litude
showing
how pas-
sions
when*

* So proves St. Aug. 1. 2 de pec. mor. cap. 6.

*they are
moderated,
may be profitable.*

quite away, but only be conquered and confounded; yet it is said, *That they shall be as though they were not.* Whereby is signified, that they shall not hinder us in the way of our salvation, but rather advance and further the same, if we will. For as wild beasts, which of their own nature are fierce, and would rather hurt than help mankind, being mastered and made tame, become very serviceable and necessary for our uses: so these rebellious passions of ours, which of themselves would utterly overthrow us, being once subdued and mortified by God's grace, and our own diligence, stand us in singular stead towards the practice and exercise of all kinds of virtues. As for example, choler or anger to the kindling of zeal; hatred to the extirpation of sin; a haughty mind, to the contemning of the world; love to the embracing of all great and heroical attempts in consideration of the benefits received from God. Besides this, the very conflict and combat itself, in subduing these passions, is left us for our greater good; that is, for the exercise of our patience, humility, merit, and victory in this life, and for our glory and crown in the life to come, as St. Paul affirmed of himself, and confirmed to all others by his example.

*Excuses
of slothful
Christians.*

Now then let the slothful Christian say, *Prov. xxvi.* 'There is a lion in the way, and a lioness in the roads,' for which he dares not stir out of doors. Let him cry, *Ib. xx.* 'Because of the cold the sluggard would not plow.' Let him excuse himself, *Ib. xxiv.* that is uneasy to labour, and therefore cannot purge his vineyard from nettles and thistles, nor build any wall about the same; that is, let him say, that his passions are strong, and therefore he cannot conquer them: his body is delicate, and therefore he dares not put it to labour; the way of a virtuous life is hard and uneasy, and therefore he cannot apply himself to it. Let him say all this and much more, which idle and slothful Christians are accustomed to bring for their excuse. Let him alledge the same as much, and as often as he will; it is but an excuse, and a false excuse, most dishonourable to the force of Christ's holy grace, purchased by his bitter passion, *Matt. xi.* that now his yoke should be unpleasant, seeing he has made it sweet; that now his burden should be heavy, seeing he has made it light; that now his commandments should be grievous

seeing his divine majesty affirms the contrary ; that now we should be in servitude of our passions, seeing he has by his grace delivered us, and made us truly free : *If God be for us, who is against us ?* says the apostle, *Rom. viii.* ‘ The Lord is my light and my salvation,’ says holy David, *Psalms xxvi.* ‘ whom shall I fear ? the Lord is the protector of my life : of whom shall I be afraid ? If armies ‘ in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear.’ And what is the reason ? Because thou art with me, O Lord, thou fightest on my side ; thou assistest me with thy grace ; by help and assistance thereof, I shall have the victory, though all the squadrons of my enemies, that is, of the flesh, the world, and the devil, should at once rise against me. Nay, I shall not only have the victory, but I shall have it also most easily, and with all pleasure, comfort, and delight. For thus much signifies St. John : when having said, that the commandments of Christ are not heavy, he infers presently, as the cause thereof, *1 John v.* ‘ For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world ;’ that is, the grace and heavenly assistance which is derived and sent us from God above, does both conquer the world, with all the difficulties and temptations thereof ; as also make the commandments of Almighty God most easy unto us, and a virtuous life very sweet and pleasant. And thus much of the first principal help that makes the path of a virtuous life easy ; I mean God’s holy grace inherent in man’s soul, which is the offspring and fountain of all other helps that ensue.

The second thing that makes this yoke so sweet, this burden so light, and this way of God’s commandments so pleasant to resolute men, is vehemency of love ; love, I mean, of God whose commandments we take in hand. *The second help is vehemency of love.* For every man can easily tell, that has experienced in himself what an irresistible force the passion of love contains, and how it makes the very greatest pains, that are in this world most easy. What makes, for example, the mother take such incessant pains in the bringing up her child, and undergo with comfort so much labour as she does, but only love ? what causes the wife to sit so attentive at the bed side of her husband, when he is sick, but only love ? what moves the beasts and birds of the air, to spare from their own food, and to endanger their

own lives, to feed and defend their little ones, but only the great force and power of love? St. Augustine prosecutes this point at large by many other examples;* as of merchants who expose themselves to the dangers of the sea for love of gain; of hunters, who suffer the inclemency of the weather for love of game; of soldiers, that refuse no danger for love of spoil. And he adds in the end. 'That if the love of man can be so great towards creatures as to make great labour easy, and seem not labours, but rather pleasures, how much more ought the love of good men towards God, make all the pains and labours they take in his service, appear comfortable.'

The great force of love between Christ and his servants.

This extreme love was the cause and reason why all those intolerable pains and afflictions which our Saviour Christ suffered for our sake, seemed nothing to him. And this love also was the reciprocal cause, why the numberless labours and tribulations, which zealous Christians from the beginning have suffered for him, their Lord and Master, seemed nothing to them. Imprisonments, torments, loss of honour, of goods and life, have seemed mere trifles to innumerable servants of God, in respect of this fervent and burning love. This love† drew multitudes of virgins, and tender children to offer themselves in a time of persecution to all kind of dreadful torments out of zealous affection towards him, who in the cause was persecuted. This love caused holy Apollonia of Alexandria, being brought to the fire, to slip out of the hands of those that led her, and joyfully to run into the same of her own accord. This love forced blessed Ignatius, the martyr, (when he was condemned to beasts, and feared lest they should refuse to tear his body, as they had refused to hurt divers martyrs before him) to say, that he would rather provoke them to pull and tear his body in pieces.

The love of God's commandments

Such are the effects of fervent love, which even makes the things that, in this world, are most difficult and dreadful themselves, to appear very easy, sweet and pleasant; and much more the laws and commandments of Almighty God, which

* See St. Augustine of this matter, Sermon 9 de verb. dom. lib. 6. cap. 34.

† Euseb.

in themselves, are most just, reasonable, holy, and easy. *Da amantem*, says St. Augustine, speaking of this matter, *sentit quod dico : Si autem frigidus loquor : nescit quod loquor :* give me a man that is in love with God, and he feels this to be true ; but if I talk to a cold Christian he understands not what I say. And this is the reason why our blessed Saviour talking of the keeping of his commandments, repeats so many times this word love, as the only sure ground whereon their whole regard, reverence, and observation depends ; for want of which love, among men in this life, the most part of the world neither respects, nor keeps them. And hence it is, that our same Saviour used these and other like speeches : *John xiv.* ‘ If you love me, keep my commandments : ’ and again, ‘ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.’ And yet further, ‘ If any one love me, he will keep my word. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words.’

In which last place some note, that to him that loves, he said, *He will keep my word*, in the singular number ; because to such a one, all his commandments are but one commandment, according to the saying of St. Paul : *Rom. xiii.* ‘ Love therefore ‘ is the fulfilment of the law,’ because it comprehends all in all. But to him that loves not, Christ says, *Keepeth not my words*, in the plural number, signifying thereby, that they are both many and heavy to him ; because he wants love, which should make them few and easy. The effect of which point St. John also expresses, when he says : *1 John v.* ‘ This is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not heavy.’ That is to say, they are not heavy to him, who has love : otherwise no marvel they appear most heavy ; for every thing appears burdensome, and intolerable, which we do against our liking. And by this also, dear brother, thou mayest make a conjecture, whether the true love of thy Lord and Saviour be in thee or not.

And these are two means, whereby the life of virtuous men is made easy in this world. There follows divers others, to the end that these negligent excusers may see, how unjust and untrue their excuse is, concerning the pre-

An observation.

The third help is peculiar light of understanding.

tended hardness of living in God's service ; which on the contrary, is filled with infinite privileges of comfort, above the life of the most prosperous sinners in this world. Whereof one is a certain special and peculiar light of understanding, appertaining to the just, and called in scripture, *Prov. ix. Prudentia Sanctorum*, the wisdom of saints : which is nothing else but a certain sparkle of heavenly wisdom, bestowed by singular privilege upon the virtuous for the direction of their life, whereby they receive most comfortable light and understanding in spiritual affairs, concerning their own and other men's salvation, and things necessary thereunto. Of which knowledge the prophet David meant, when he said : *Psal. xv.* 'Thou hast made known to me the ' ways of life.' As also when he said of himself ; *Psal. cxviii.* 'I have had understanding above ancients.' And again in another place : *Psal. l.* 'The uncertain and hidden things of thy wisdom, thou hast made manifest unto me.' This is that most excellent light wherewith St. John said : *John i.* that Christ our Saviour enlightens his true servants, as also that unction of the Holy Ghost which the same apostle teaches to be given to the godly, *1. John i.* thereby to instruct them in all things requisite for their salvation. This in like manner, is that writing of God's law in men's hearts, which he promised so long ago by the prophet Jeremiah, *Jer. xxxi.* and so performed in the time of grace ; as also the instruction of men immediately from God himself, foretold by the prophet Isaiah, *Isa. liv.* And finally, this is that sovereign understanding of the law, commandments, and justifications of Almighty God, which holy David so much desired, and so often demanded in that most divine Psalm, which begins with this vehement protestation ; *Psal. cxviii.* 'Blessed are the undefiled in the way' (that is in this life) 'who walk in the law of the Lord.'

By this heavenly light of understanding, and *The Great* by this supernatural illumination imparted to *comfort of* the good for their direction, the way of virtue *internal* is made very easy and exceeding comfortable. *light.*

For as in bodily sight and in voyages of this world, it falls out, that he who has good eyes and sees perfectly, goes on in his way with far greater alacrity, joy, and security, than does another that either wants that sense or has it very dim: so in the course of our soul in this life, it is of no less importance and comfort, but rather of much more, for a man to have this celestial under-

for the governing of himself in order to his salvation : that is, to know what he does, see where he walks, discern whither he goes, conceive what he expects and to be in that happy state whereof St. Paul says : 1 *Cor.* ii. ‘The spiritual man judgeth all things.’ Whereas in the meantime, the carnal and sensual man, as the same apostle testifies, is so blind that he cannot *perceive the things that are of the spirit of God*. Of which sort of men the prophet Isaiah says in their own person expressing their misery . *Isaiah* lix. ‘We have groped like the blind for the wall. ‘We have stumbled at noon-day as in darkness.’ By which words the exceeding great calamity of wicked men, who see not where they go, what state they are in, how far off, or how near they are to perdition, but do live in continual darkness and most uncomfortable blindness, is declared to us. Which they confess also in another place of holy scripture, saying ; *Sap.* v. ‘The light of justice hath not ‘shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not ‘risen upon us, we wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity.’ The want then of this heavenly light is tiresome and miserable to the wicked, and consequently the enjoying thereof most comfortable to the virtuous.

Now then to proceed, another principal matter which makes the way of virtue easy, and pleasant to them that walk therein, is a certain hidden and secret consolation which God infuses into the hearts of them that truly serve him. I call it *secret* and *hidden*, because it is known to none but such only as have felt and received part thereof. For which cause, Christ himself calls it : *Apoc.* ii. *Hidden manna*, known to them alone that do enjoy it. To which effect also the prophet David said to Almighty God : *Psal.* xxx. ‘How great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O ‘Lord which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee.’ And again in another place : Voluntary rain shalt thou separate, O God, to thine inheritance.’ And Almighty God himself promises to a devout soul by the prophet Hosea : *Hosea* ii. ‘I will lead her into the wilderness, and I ‘will speak to her heart : that is, I will comfort her. By all which sayings is signified to us, that this consolation is a secret privilege bestowed only upon the virtuous, that the carnal hearts of wicked men have no part or portion therein

But now, how exceeding great and inestimable the

*The
fourth
help is
internal
consolation.*

*The force
and sweet-
ness of this
consolation.*

sweetness of this heavenly wine is to them that taste it, no tongue of man or angels can express. A certain conjecture only may be made by the words of holy David, *Psal.* xxxv. and lxiv. who attributes to it sufficient force to inebriate all that taste thereof; that is to say, to take from them all sense and delectation in terrestrial pleasures, as it did from St. Peter, who when he received but a drop or two thereof upon mount Thabor, at his master's transfiguration, forgot himself presently, and talked like a man distracted, touching the building of tabernacles there, and resting in that place forever. This is that torrent of pleasure, as the prophet calls it, which coming from the mountains of heaven, waters, by secret ways and passages, the hearts and spirits of the godly, and inebriates them with the unspeakable joy, which it derives to them. This is a kind of taste of the

*A simili-
tude
express-
ing the
cause why
God gives
this conso-
lation.*

very joys of heaven in this life, bestowed upon good men, to comfort and encourage them in their way and to keep them from fainting. For as merchants, desirous to sell their goods, are content oftentimes to let you see and handle, and sometimes also to taste the same, if the nature thereof so require, thereby the sooner to induce you to buy: even so Almighty God, being very careful and willing to sell us the joys of heaven, is content to impart a certain taste beforehand to such as he sees are willing buy, thereby to make them willing to lay down the price and to stick to pay, even more labour than he requires. This is that exceeding joy and jubilee in the hearts of just men, which the prophet speaks of when he says: *Psal.* cxvii. 'The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the just.' And again; *Psal.* lxxxviii. 'Blessed is the people that knoweth jubilation.' That is, that people which has experienced this exceeding joy and pleasure of internal consolation. St. Paul had tasted it when he writ these words, amidst all his labours for *JESUS CHRIST.* 2 *Cor.* vii. 'I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.' What can be spoken dear brother, more effectually than this, to show the divine force of this spiritual consolation.

*The way
to come to
spiritual
consola-
tion.*

But thou wilt hear ask me perhaps, if this be so, why being a Christian as others, thou hast never yet tasted of this consolation? whereunto I answer, that, as it has been showed be-

fore, this is a chosen dew, provided for God's inheritance only. This is wine of God's own cellar, laid up for his spouse alone; that is, for the devout soul dedicated to God's service. The soul that is drowned in sinful pleasures and delights of this world, cannot be partaker of this rare benefit, nor the heart that is replenished with carnal cares and worldly thoughts. For as God's ark and the idol Dagon could not stand together upon one altar; so cannot Christ and the world stand together in one heart. God sent not the pleasant manna to the people of Israel, *Exod.* xvi. as long as their flour and chibbols of Ægypt lasted; neither will he send his heavenly consolation to thee, dear brother, until thou hast rid thyself, at least in part, of the vanities of the world. He is a prudent merchant, though liberal. He will not give a taste of his treasure, where he knows there is no will to buy or purchase. Resolve thyself once to serve him, and thou shalt then feel this heavenly joy, whereof I talk, as many thousands before thee have done, and never yet any man was herein deceived. Moses first ran out of Ægypt to the hills of Madian, before God appeared to him; *Exod.* ii. and so must thy soul leave the vanities of the world before she can hope for these consolations.

*Worldly
consola-
tions and
heavenly,
stand not
well toge-
ther.*

But if thou wouldst resolve thyself effectually, and once offer thyself thoroughly to his divine service, then, no doubt, but thou wouldst find most sweet and merciful entertainment above all expectation notwithstanding thy former evil life and sins whatsoever. For such is the abundant goodness of his divine majesty, for the encouraging all men to repair unto him; that he always shows more particular and tender love towards them that come newly to his service, than to others who have served him a longer time. Which is most evidently signified by the parable of the prodigal son, whom the good father cherished with much more tenderness and solicitude, than he did the elder brother who had served him continually. And the causes hereof are two; the one for joy of the new gotten servant, as is expressed by St. Luke in the Gospel: *Luke* xv. The other, lest he, finding no consolation at the beginning, should turn back to Ægypt again: as God by a figure in the children of Israel, declares most manifestly, in these words: *Exod.* xiii. When

*Beginners
chiefly cher-
ished by
God.*

Pharaoh had permitted the people of Israel to depart out of Ægypt, God brought them not by the country of the Philistines, which was the nearest way, thinking with himself, lest perhaps it might repent them, if they should see wars straight-ways rise against them, and so should return into Ægypt again. Behold here the cause why Almighty God would not presently permit war and desolation to fall upon his people, after they were departed out of Ægypt, lest they should repent them, and so turn back again. What fatherly heart can express a more tender and inflamed love than this.

The fifth help is the Yet to go forward: after this privilege of internal consolation, ensues another, making *peace of* the service of God also pleasant; and this is *conscience.* the testimony of a good conscience, whereof blessed St. Paul made so great account, *2 Cor. i.* that he called it his glory. And the Holy Ghost says of it further, by the mouth of the wise man: *Prov. xv.* A secure mind (and a good conscience) is like a continual feast. Out of which we may infer, that the virtuous man, having always this secure mind and peace of conscience, lives always in festival joy and joyful feasting. Now then how is this life hard or unpleasant, as you imagine? on the contrary, the wicked man, having his conscience vexed with the privity and guilt of many sins, is always a torment to himself; as we read that the conscience of wicked Cain was after he had slain his own brother; and of Antiochus, for his wickedness done to Jerusalem; and of Judas, for his treason against his master; and this is generally true in regard to all wicked men. The reason whereof the holy scripture gives in another place, when it says, *Sap. xvii.* For whereas wickedness is fearful, it beareth witness of its condemnation: for a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things. That is to say, presumes cruel things, to be imminent over itself, as it makes account to have deserved. Eliphaz, one of the Friends of holy Job, sets forth most lively, this miserable state of wicked men's consciences: *Job. xv.* The wicked man, says *The trouble of an evil conscience.* he is proud all his days, the number of the years of his tyranny is uncertain. The sound of dread is always in his ears, and when there is peace, he always suspected treason. He believeth not that he may return from darkness to light, looking round

about for the sword on every side. When he moveth himself to seek bread, he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand. Tribulation shall terrify him, and distress shall surround him, as a king that is prepared for the battle. Thus he.

Can anything be expressed more effectually, loving brother, than this matter is here set down in holy writ itself? what creature can be imagined more miserable than this man, who has such a butchery and slaughter-house within his own breast and heart? what fears, what anguishes, what despair is here declared? St. Chrysostom discourses most excellently upon this point.* ‘Such is the custom of the sinners, says he, that they suspect all things in so much that they fear their own shadows; they are afraid of every little noise, and they think every man that comes towards them, comes against them. If men talk together, they think they speak of their sins. Such a thing is sin, that it betrays itself, though no man accuse it: it holds a sinner always in extreme fear although there is no appearance of any danger nigh him. Hear how notably holy writ describes this fear of sinners and the just man’s liberty: *Prov. xxviii.* The wicked man flies though no man pursues him; because he has within his own conscience an accuser that pursues him, which accuser he always carries about him. And as he cannot fly from himself, so he cannot fly from his accuser, that rests within his conscience; wheresoever he goes he is pursued, beaten, and whipped by the same, and his wound is incurable. But the just man is not so. The just, says Solomon, is as confident as a lion. Hitherto are the words of St. Chrysostom.

The saying of St. Chrysostom of a wicked conscience.

SECT. III.—*Of five other helps and comforts to the same effects.*

But besides what has been alledged before, we will take notice of another prerogative of a virtuous life which is a most lively hope and confidence of, eternal salvation, this being one of the greatest treasures and richest jewels that Christians

The sixth help is confident hope.

* Hom 1 8. ad pop. Antioc.

have left them in this life. For by this we pass through all afflictions, tribulations, and adversities, most joyfully. By this we say with Paul, *Rom. v.* ‘We glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and ‘patience trial; and trial hope; and hope confoundeth not.’ This is our most strong and mighty comfort; this is our sure anchor in all our most tempestuous times and storms, according to what the same holy apostle assures, when he says, *Heb. vi.* That it is a most strong solace and comfort to us, when we fly for refuge to the hope that is proposed by God that cannot lie, which hope we hold as the sure and infallible anchor of our soul. This is that noble helmet of salvation, as the same apostle calls it, *Ephes. vi.* & *1 Thes. v.* which bears off all the blows that this world can lay upon us. And finally, this is the only comfort to the heart of a virtuous man, that, come life or come death, come health or come sickness, come wealth or come poverty, come prosperity or come adversity, come ever so violent seas and waves of persecution, he sits down quietly, and says calmly with the prophet: *Psal. lv.* In God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do against me: Nay further with holy Job, amidst all his miseries, he utters this most confident speech: *Job xiii.* Although he should kill me, I will trust in him. And this is, as the scripture said before, to be as confident as a lion: whose property is to show most courage when he is in greatest peril, and near to most troubles.

But now as the Holy Ghost says: *Psal. i.* ‘Not so ‘the wicked, not so:’ they cannot say thus, they have no part in this confidence, no interest in this consolation, because *Prov. x.* The hope of the wicked (is vain and) shall perish. And *Prov. xi.* The expectation of the wicked is indignation. And the reason hereof is two-fold. First, because wicked men, though they say the contrary in words, they do not indeed put their trust and confidence in God, but in the world, in their riches, in their strength, friends, authority, and finally, in the deceitful arm of man: even as the prophet expresses in their persons, when he says: *Prov. xi.* ‘We have made lying our hope, and with lying we are ‘protected: that is, we have put our hope in transitory things which have deceived us. And this is yet more clearly expressed by the scripture, saying: *Sap. v.* The hope of the wicked is as dust, which is blown away with

the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm : and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind : and as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by. By all which metaphors, the Holy Ghost expresses to us, both the vanity of things wherein the wicked put their trust ; and how the same fails them after a little time upon every small occasion of adversity that happens.

This is what God means, when he threatens so terribly, *Isaiah xxx. & xxxvi.* against those who go into Ægypt for help, and put their confidence in the strength of Pharaoh, cursing them for the same ; and promising, that it shall turn to their confusion ; which is properly to be understood of all those who put their chief confidence in worldly helps ; as all wicked men do, whatsoever they say or dissemble to the contrary. For which cause also of dissimulation, they are all called hypocrites by Job : for whereas the wise man says, *Prov. x.* the hope of the wicked shall perish, Job says, *Job xxvii.* ‘For what is the hope of

‘ the hypocrite—will God hear his cry when distress shall come upon him ?’ calling wicked men hypocrites ; because they say, they put their hope in God, whereas, indeed they put it in the world. Which thing, not only scripture, but also experience teaches. For whom does the wicked man consult in his affairs and doubts ? with God principally, or with the world ? whom does he seek in his afflictions ? whom does he call upon in his sickness ? from whom hopes he to receive comfort in his adversities ? to whom does he give thanks in his prosperities ? When a worldly man takes any work of importance in hand, does he first consult with God about the event thereof ? does he fall down on his knees and ask his aid ? does he refer it wholly or principally to his honour ? if he does not, how can he hope for aid from him ? how can he repair to him for assistance in the dangers and difficulties that fall out about the same ? how can he have any confidence in him who has no part at all in that work ? It is hypocrisy then, as Job truly says, for this man to affirm, that his confidence is in God, whereas indeed it is in the world, it is in Pharaoh, it is in Egypt, it is in the arm of man, it is in a lie. He builds not his house with the wise man upon a rock, but with the fool upon sands : and therefore, as Christ well assures him, ‘ The rain fell and the floods came. and the

The wicked man's hope is not in God.

The fall of a wicked man's house.

‘winds blew, and they beat against that house, and it fell:’ (which will be at the hour of death) ‘and the fall thereof was great. Great for the great change which he will see; great for the great horror which he will conceive; great, for the great misery which he will suffer; great, for the unspeakable joys of heaven lost; great, for the eternal pains of hell incurred; great every way assure thyself, dear brother, or else the mouth of God would never have used this word great. And this is sufficient for the first reason, why the hope of wicked men is vain; because indeed they put it not in God, but in the world.

*Wicked
men can-
not hope
in God.*

The second reason is, because although they should put their hope in God, yet, living wickedly, it is in vain, and rather to be called presumption than hope. For the understanding whereof, it is to be noted, that as there are two kinds of faith, recounted in holy scripture, the one dead, without good works, that is, which believes all you say of Christ, but yet observes not his commandments, the other a lively and justifying faith, which not only believes, but also works by charity, as St. Paul’s words are: so there are two hopes following these two kinds of faith, the one of the good proceeding from a good conscience, whereof I have spoken before: the other wicked, resting in a guilty conscience, which is indeed no true hope, but rather presumption. This St. John proves plainly, when he says: 1 *John* iii. ‘If our heart do not reprehend us, ‘we have confidence towards God:’ That is, if our heart be not guilty of a wicked life. And the words immediately following, more plainly express the same, which are these: ‘Whatsoever we shall ask, we shall receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.’ St. Paul affirms the same, when he says: 1 *Tim.* 1. ‘The end of the commandment ‘is charity, from a pure heart, and a good conscience.’

*St. Au-
gustine’s
saying of
hope.*

Which words St. Augustine expounded in divers places of his works, proves at large, that without a good conscience there can be no true hope conceived. ‘St. Paul says he,* adds, from a good ‘conscience,’ because of hope; for he, who has ‘the contradiction of an evil conscience, despairs to attain ‘that which he believes. And again, ‘Every man’s hope ‘is in his conscience, according as he feels himself to love

* L. 1. de doct. Christ. c. 40.

‘ God.’ And again in another book :* ‘ The apostle puts
 ‘ a good conscience for hope ; for he only hopes who has a
 ‘ good conscience : and he, whom the guilt of an evil con-
 ‘ science pricks, retires back from hope, and hopes noth-
 ‘ ing but his own damnation.’

I might here repeat a great many privileges and prerogatives of a virtuous life, which make the same easy, pleasant and comfortable, but that this chapter grows long ; and therefore I will only touch (as it were by the by) two or three of the most principal points, which notwithstanding would require large discourses, to declare the same according to their dignity.

The seventh help is freedom of mind.

The first whereof is, the inestimable privilege of liberty and freedom, which the virtuous enjoy above the wicked, according to what Christ promises in these words : *John viii.* ‘ If you continue in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed ; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free :’ which words St. Paul, as it were expounding says : *2 Cor. iii.* ‘ Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.’ To wit, liberty from tyranny and thaldrom of our corrupt sensuality and concupiscence, called by divines, the inferior part of our soul ; whereunto the wicked are so enslaved, that never was any bond slave more to a most merciless, cruel, and bloody tyrant. This in part may be conceived by this one example. If a man had married a rich, beautiful and noble gentlewoman, adorned with all endowments which can be desired in that sex, and yet notwithstanding should be so besotted and entangled with the love of some foul and dishonest beggar, or servile maid of his house, as to abandon, for her sake, the company and friendship of his said wife, to spend his time in dalliance and service of this base woman : to run, to go, stand still at her appointment : to put all his livings and revenues into her hands, for her to consume and spoil at her pleasure : to deny her nothing, but to wait and serve her at a beck, yea, and to compel his said wife to do the same ; would you not think this man’s life miserable and most servile ? and yet surely the manner of servitude whereof we talk, is far greater and more intolerable than

An example expressing the bondage of wicked men, given to sensuality.

* In præfat. Psalm 31.

this. For no woman, or other creature in this world, is or can be so beautiful or noble as reason is, to whom man by his creation was espoused; which notwithstanding we see abandoned, contemned, and rejected by him for the love of sensuality her hand maid, and a most deformed creature; in whose love notwithstanding, or rather servitude, we see wicked men so drowned, that they serve her day and night with all pains, perils, and expenses; and also constrain reason herself to the subject to all the becks and commands of this new tyrannical and vile mistress. For why do they labour, why do they heap riches together, but only to serve their sensuality and her desires? wherefore do they beat their brains, but only to satisfy this cruel tyrant and her passions.

And if you will see how cruel and pitiful this servitude truly is consider only some particular example of the same. Take a man whom she overrules in any passion: as for example, in the lust of the flesh, what pains does he take for her? how does he labour? how does he drudge in servitude? how potent and strong does he feel her tyranny? remember the strength of Sampson; the wisdom of Solomon; the sanctity of David, overthrown by tyranny. Jupiter, Mars, and Hercules, who for their valiant acts, otherwise were accounted gods of the heathens; were they not overcome, and made slaves by the enchantment of this tyrant? and if you will further see of what strength she is, and how cruelly she executes the same upon those that Christ has not delivered from her bondage; consider for example, the sad case of some disloyal wife, who though she knows that, by committing adultery, she runs into a thousand dangers and inconveniences; as the loss of God's favour, the hatred of her husband, the dangers of punishment, the offence of her friends, the utter dishonour of her person, if it be known; and finally, the ruin and peril of body and soul: yet to satisfy this tyrant, she will venture to commit the sin, notwithstanding any dangers or perils whatsoever. Neither is it only in this one point of carnal lust wherein sensuality has such a tyrannical dominion over them that enthrall themselves to her, but also in every other passion. Look upon an ambitious or vain-glorious man: see how he serves his mistress, with what care and diligence he attends her commands; which

The misery of a man ruled by sensuality.

An ambitious man.

is nothing else, but to run after a little wind, to pursue a little feather flying before him in the air. You will see that he omits nothing, no time, no circumstance for the gaining thereof. He rises early, goes late to bed, works by day, studies by night; here he flatters, there he dissembles, here he stoops, there he looks big: here he makes friends, prevents enemies, and refers all his actions to this only end, and applies all his other concerns, all the order of his life, his conversation, his apparel, his house, his stable, his horses, his servants, his talk, his behaviour, his jests, his looks, and his very walking in the streets, to this same purport.

In like manner he that serves his sensuality in the passion of covetousness, what a miserable *A covetous man.* slavery does he endure? his heart being so immured in prison with money, that he can only think, talk, dream thereof, and imagine new ways to get the same, and nothing else! if you should see a Christian in slavery amongst the Turks; tied in the galley by the legs with chains, there to serve by rowing for ever, you could not but take compassion of his case; and shall we not take compassion of the misery of this man, who is captive to a more base creature than is the Turk, or any other rational creature; that is, to a piece of metal, in whose prison he lies bound, not only by the feet, so that he cannot go any where against the will and command of the same, but also by the hands, by the mouth, by the eyes, by the ears, and by the heart; so that he can neither speak, see, hear, nor think, but in service of this mammon? Was there ever servitude so great as this? Does not then Christ very truly say, *John* viii. 'Whosoever committeth sin, 'is the servant of sin.' Does not St. Peter say well, *2 Pet.* ii. 'For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also 'he is the slave.'

From this slavery the virtuous are delivered by the power of Christ; and by his assistance; so *The liberty a man has by serving God.* that they rule over their passions and sensuality, and are not ruled thereby. This God promised by the prophet Ezekiel, saying, *Ezek.* xxxiv.

'And they shall know that I am the Lord when I shall 'have broken the bonds of their yoke, and shall have delivered them out of the hand of those that rule over them.' And this benefit holy David acknowledged in himself, when he used these most affecting words to Almighty God: O

Lord, because I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast broken my bands, I will sacrifice to thee the host of praise. This benefit St. Paul also acknowledged when he said, *Rom. vi.* That our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer. Understanding by the *old man*, and the *body of sin*, our concupiscence, mortified in the virtuous, by the grace of Christ.

*The eighth
help is,
peace of
mind.*

After this privilege of freedom, follows another, of no less importance than this; and that is a certain heavenly peace, serenity and tranquillity of mind, according to the saying of the prophet.

Psalms lxxv. *His place is in peace.* And in another place, *Psalms cxviii.* 'Such peace have they that love thy law.' And on the contrary, the prophet Isaiah oftentimes repeats this terrible sentence, from the mouth of Almighty God himself, *Isaiah xlvi.* 'There is no peace to the wicked saith the Lord.' And another prophet says of the same men: *Psalms xliii.* 'Destruction and unhappiness in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known.' The reason of this difference has been declared heretofore, and comes from the diversity of good and evil men in conquering their passions. For the virtuous having now, by the aid of Christ's holy grace, subdued these passions, do pass on their life most sweetly and calmly under the guide of reason, without any perturbations to endanger them in the greatest occurrences of this miserable life. But the wicked, not having mortified any part of their passions, are tossed and tumbled by the same, as by vehement and contrary winds. And therefore their state is compared by Isaiah, *Isa. lvii.* to a raging sea, which cannot rest: and by St. James, *James iii.* to a city or country, where the inhabitants are at war and sedition among themselves. And the

*Two causes of
disquietness
in wicked
men.*

causes thereof are two. First, because these passions of concupiscence being many and almost infinite in number, do lust after infinite things, and are never satisfied, but are like the horse-leech, which the wise man speaks of, *Prov. xxx.* that

always cry, *bring, bring*, and never say *it is enough*. As for example, tell me when is the ambitious man satisfied with honour? or the incontinent man with carnality? or the covetous man with money? never truly. And there-

fore as that mother cannot but be greatly afflicted, who should have many children crying to her at once for meat, she having no food at all, or not sufficient to give them : so the wicked man being greedily called on without ceasing, by almost infinite passions, to yield to their desires, must needs be vexed and tormented, especially, being not able to satisfy any of the least of their petitions.

A similitude.

Another cause of vexation in these men, is, because these passions of inordinate concupiscence are oftentimes contrary the one to the other, and demand most opposite and contrary things representing to us most lively the confusion of Babel, where one tongue spoke against another, and that in divers and contrary languages. So we see oftentimes that the desire of honour says to his master, *spend here*, but the passion of avarice says, *hold thy hand* : lechery says, *venture here*, but pride says, *no, it may turn to my dishonour*. Anger says, *revenge thyself here* ; but ambition says, *it is better to dissemble*. And finally, here is fulfilled that which the prophet says, *Psalms liv.* ‘ I have seen iniquity and ‘ contradiction in the city.’ Iniquity, because all the demands of these passions are most unjust, being against reason : contradiction, because one contradicts the other in their demands. From all which miseries, God has delivered the just, by giving them his peace, *which passes all understanding*, as the apostle says, and which the world can neither give nor taste, as Christ himself affirms. And thus, many causes may be alleged, now, besides many others which I pass over to justify the verity of our Saviour’s words, affirming, *That his yoke is sweet and easy* : to wit, the instance of grace, the love of God, the light of understanding, the eternal consolation, the quiet of conscience, the confidence proceeding from thence, the liberty of soul and body, with the sweet rest and peace of our spirits, both towards God, our neighbours, and ourselves. By all which means, helps, privileges, and singular benefits, the virtuous are assisted above the wicked, as has been showed, and their way made easy, light, and pleasant.

The second cause.

To all which, we may yet adjoin one other great privilege, as the last, but not the least, comfort to them that walk under the yoke of Christ’s service ? and this is the promise and most assured expectation of reward ; to wit, of eternal glory

The ninth reason is expectation of reward.

and felicity to the good, and of everlasting damnation and torments unto the wicked. O good God, what a subject is this, to comfort the one, if their life is painful, and to afflict the other amidst the greatest pleasures and sweetest delights. The labourer, when he thinks of his

An example. good pay at night, is encouraged to go through the heat of the day, though it be painful to him.

Two that should pass together towards their country, the one to receive honour for good service done abroad, the other as a prisoner to be arraigned for treasons committed in foreign dominions against his sovereign, could not be alike merry in their inn upon the way. For although he that stood in danger should sing, or make a show of courage and comfort and set a good face upon the matter; yet the other might well think, that his heart had many a check within him as no doubt but wicked men have, when they think within themselves of the life to come. If Joseph and Pharaoh's baker, had known both their distinct lots in prison; to wit, that on such a day, one should be called to be made lord of Ægypt, and the other to be hanged, they could hardly have been alike merry, whilst they lived together in the time of their imprisonment. The like may be said, and much more truly, of virtuous and wicked men in this world; for when the one does but think upon the day of death, which to him is to be the day of deliverance from his prison, his heart cannot but leap for joy, considering what is hereafter to happen to him. But the others are afflicted, and fall into melancholy and extreme desolation, as often as mention or remembrance of death is offered: for they are sure, that it brings with it their everlasting doom, according as holy scripture says: *Prov. xi.* 'When the wicked man is dead, there shall be no hope any more.'

If then, dear Christian, all these things be so; what should hinder thee now from making this resolution whereunto I exhort thee; wilt thou yet say, notwithstanding all this, that the matter is hard, and the way unpleasant? or wilt thou believe others that tell thee so, although they know less of the matter than thyself? believe rather the word and promise of thy Saviour Christ, *Matt. xvii.* who assures thee the contrary. Believe the reasons before alleged, which do prove it most evidently. Believe the testimonies of them who have experienced the matter in them-

selves : as, a king David, St. Paul, St. John Evangelis, and others, whose testimonies I have alleged before, concerning their own experience. Believe many hundreds, who by a vicious life to the perfect service of our word : all which protest, that themselves have found much more felicity and comfort than either I have said in this place, or can say of the matter.

And because perhaps thou mayest reply that
The tenth help is the experience which others have had. such men as have experienced this in themselves are not now living in the place where thou art, to give this testimony of their own experience : I can, and do assure thee upon my conscience, before Almighty God, that I have had conferences with no small number of such persons myself, and that to my singular comfort, in beholding the exceeding bountifulness of God's sweetness towards them in this case. O dear brother, no tongue can express what I have seen herein ; and yet I saw not the least part of that which they felt inwardly. But yet this may I say, that they that attend in the Catholic Church to deal with souls in the holy sacrament of confession, are indeed those, of whom the prophet says : *Psalm cvi.* That doing business

‘ in the great waters : these have seen the works of the ‘ Lord, and his wonders in the deep.’ In the depth, I say, of men's consciences uttered with infinity of tears, when God touches the same with his holy grace. Believe me, good reader, for I speak in truth before our Lord *JESUS*, I have seen so great and exceeding consolation in divers great sinners after their conversion, that no heart can conceive it, and the hearts which received them were hardly able to contain the same : so abundantly did that heavenly dew distil from the most liberal and bountiful hand of God. And that this may not seem strange to thee, thou must know, that it is recorded of a holy man called Ephraim, that he had so great consolations after his conversion, that he was often constrained to cry out to God : O Lord, retire thy hand from me a little, for my heart is not able to receive so much joy. And the like is written of St. Bernard,* who, for a certain time after his conversion from the world, remained as it were deprived of his senses, by the excessive consolation he had from God.

* Vid. pratum spirituale. SS. Patrum. Gotfr. in vita. Bern.

However, if all this cannot move thee, but thou wilt still remain in thy distrust, hear the testimony of one, whom

I am sure thou wilt not for shame discredit, especially speaking of his own experience: and this is the holy martyr and Doctor, St. Cyprian, who writing of the very same matter to a friend of his

called Donatus, confesses,* that he was before his conversion, being yet a Gentile, of the same opinion that Donatus was now; to wit, that it was impossible for him to change his manners so easily, and to find such comfort in a virtuous life, as after he did, being accustomed before, and habituated to the contrary; and so entitles the argument of his discourse: *Of the force of God's grace*, and begins his narration in this manner. 'Take that which

St. Cyprian's doubts and difficulties of the force of God's grace.

' is first felt before it be learned, and that which is not gathered by long tract of time, but is received in a moment, by the compendious influence of God's holy grace. When I lay in darkness and in that blind night of ignorance, whilst I floated hither and thither as doubtful and wavering in this sea of the troublesome world, being ignorant of my own life, and void both of truth and light, I did esteem it hard and difficult, according to these manners of mine, that which God's mercy did promise me for my salvation, that I might be born again into a new life, by the benefit of baptism, and that laying aside the former corruption which before possessed my body, I should be made new in mind and soul without dissolution of my said body.

' This I say, seemed to be impossible; for how said I to myself, can so great a conversion be expected, how can that which by continuance has been made, as it were, natural? and that which by long use is so ingrafted, that now it is almost impossible to be removed, be shaken off on the sudden? when said I to myself, will he learn parsimony, or to be sparing in diet, who is accustomed to large and delicious banquets? and when will he, who is wont to shine and glitter in precious apparel, in gold and purple, come down and be content to abase himself to mean and vulgar attire? he that is delighted with honours and authority, and ensigns of rule and charge to be carried before him, cannot abide to be inglorious, and to lead

* L. 1 cap. 1.

‘ a private life. Another that is accustomed to walk with
 ‘ a great train of clients and dependants, thinks
 ‘ it a great punishment to be alone and solitary. *Imagined*
 ‘ And finally, he that is once entangled with the *impossi-*
 ‘ snares and alluring baits of vice, can very hard- *bilities.*
 ‘ ly avoid, but that drunkenness will provoke him; pride
 ‘ will puff him up; anger will inflame him, covetousness
 ‘ will disquiet him; cruelty will sting him, ambition will
 ‘ draw him; lust will precipitate and cast him down head-
 ‘ long.

‘ This did I debate with myself before my conversion,
 ‘ when I was entangled with infinite errors of my former
 ‘ life, and did not believe that I could be delivered from
 ‘ them, having so given myself over to their dominion, that
 ‘ I did now despair of amendment. But after that these
 ‘ spots of my former life were once cleansed by the help
 ‘ of the holy baptism, and that the light of heaven came
 ‘ down into my purged and pure breast; after the Holy
 ‘ Ghost coming from above, did renew me by a second na-
 ‘ tivity, making me a new man; it is wonderful, how soon
 ‘ those things, which were doubtful before, were made
 ‘ clear to me, and those things opened, which were shut
 ‘ before, and those things did shine, which before were
 ‘ dusky and dark. It is wonderful, I say, how that which
 ‘ seemed hard was now made easy, and that which was
 ‘ thought impossible appeared now feasible: so that it
 ‘ might well appear, that what before I felt in myself, was
 ‘ earthly, and born of the flesh, and subject to sin; and
 ‘ that what now I felt, was quickened by Al-
 ‘ mighty God, and endured with life by the Holy *What St.*
 ‘ Ghost. Truly, thou knowest, my friend Do- *Cyprian*
 ‘ natus, and canst remember together with me, *felt after*
 ‘ that this new state of our’s (I mean this death *his con-*
 ‘ of sin, and life of virtue) has taken from us of *version.*
 ‘ the one, and brought to us of the other. Thou knowest
 ‘ it, I say, neither is it convenient for me to brag of it; for
 ‘ it is an odious thing to boast in a man’s own praises, al-
 ‘ though in truth it cannot well be called boasting, but rather
 ‘ gratitude, whatsoever is not ascribed to the virtue or
 ‘ merit of man, but to the gift of Almighty God, &c.

Thus far St. Cyprian; who being so great a man, and
 having experienced both the states of vice and virtue, ought
 greatly to move us. And St. Augustine writes the very

same thing of himself in his book of confessions ;* showing that his own passions and the devil would needs have persuaded him before his conversion, that he would never be able to abide the austerity of a virtuous life, especially in regard to continency from sins of the flesh, which notwithstanding, he afterwards† found both easy and pleasant, and without all difficulty. For which he breaks into these words, directed to Almighty God himself out of the psalmist : *Psal.* xxxiv. ‘ O my Lord, let me remember and confess thy mercies towards me : let my very bones rejoice and say, O Lord, who is like unto thee ? *Psalm* cxv. ‘ thou hast broken my bonds : I will sacrifice to thee the sacrifice of praise, &c.’ These chains, which the blessed man mentions, were the chains of concupiscence, where-with he was bound in captivity as he there confesses, before his conversion ; but presently thereupon he was delivered from the same, by the blessed help of God’s most holy grace.

My counsel therefore to thee, gentle reader, is, that seeing thou hast so many testimonies, examples, reasons, and promises of this matter, thou shouldest at least prove once by thy own experience, whether this thing be true or not ; especially, seeing it is a matter of so great importance, and so worthy thy trial : that is to say, a matter so nearly concerning thy eternal salvation, as it does. If a

A similitude.

mean fellow should come to thee, and offer, for the hazarding of one crown of gold, to make thee a thousand pounds by alchymy ; although thou shouldest suspect him for a cozener, yet the hope of gain being so great, and the adventure of loss so small, thou wouldest go nigh for once, to venture and see the trial. And how much more shouldest thou do it then in this case, where, by proof, thou canst loose nothing ; and if thou speedest well, thou art sure to gain as much as God’s kingdom, and the everlasting joy of heaven is worth.

SECT. IV. *Containing certain instructions and examples to help towards overcoming difficulties.*

AND now, although this great affair be such as I have declared before, and not such as the world and satan re-

* Lib. 6. Confess. cap. 12, 13, 14. † Ibid. lib. 8. cap. 1.

present it to men, yet I cannot in this place, dear Christian, but admonish thee of one thing, which the ancient fathers and saints of God, that have passed over this river before thee, I mean the river dividing between God's service and the world, do affirm of their own experience; and that is that as soon as thou takest this work or resolution in hand, thou must expect many great encounters, strong impediments, sharp contradictions, and fierce temptations: thou must expect assaults, combats, and open war within thyself for a time. For this St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and St. Bernard, do affirm upon their own experience, notwithstanding they had the victory so easily, as has been said. This do Cyril and Origen show in divers places at large upon like experience. This does St. Hilary prove both by reasons and examples. 'This does the scripture forewarn thee of, when it says, *Eccles. ii.* 'Son ' when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice ' and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation.' And the reason of this is, because the devil, possessing thy soul quietly before, lay still, and sought only means to content the same by daily suggesting new delights of carnal and worldly pleasures. But when he sees that thou offerest to go from him, he begins straightway to rage, and to move sedition within thee, and to toss up and down both heaven and earth, before he will lose his kingdom, in thy soul. This is evident by the example of him whom our Saviour Christ, coming down from the hill, after his transfiguration, delivered from a deaf and dumb spirit. For although this devil would seem neither to hear nor speak while he possessed that body quietly; yet when Christ commanded him to go out, he both heard and cried out, and did so tear and rend that poor body before he departed, that all the standers by, thought that he had been dead. This also in figure was showed by the story of Laban, *Gen. xxxi.* who never persecuted his son-in-law Jacob, till he would needs depart from him. And yet this was more plainly expressed in the proceeding of Pharaoh, who, after once he perceived that the people of Israel meant to depart his kingdom, never ceased grievously to afflict them, as Moses testifies, *Exod. v.* till God delivered them out of his hands. with the ruin and destruction of all their enemies, which all holy doctors and saints in God's church have expounded

*Difficul-
ties at the
begin-
ning.*

to be the plain figure of the delivery of souls from the tyranny of the devil.

The conversion of St. Augustine. And now if thou wouldst have a lively example of all that I have said before, I could alledge thee many; but for brevity sake, one only of St. Augustine's conversion shall suffice, testified by himself in his *books of Confession*. It is a marvellous example and contains many most notable and comfortable points. And surely whosoever will but read the whole at large, especially in his sixth, seventh, and eighth, books of his *Confessions*, will be much moved and instructed thereby. And I beseech the reader, to look over at least certain chapters of the eighth book, where this saint's final conversion, after infinite combats, is recounted. It would be too long to repeat all here, though indeed it is such a subject, that no man could ever be weary to hear it. There he shows* how he was tossed in his conflicts between the flesh and the spirit; between God drawing on one side, and the world, the flesh, and the devil, holding back on the other. He went to Simplicianus† a learned old man, and a devout Christian; he went to St. Ambrose bishop of Milan, and after his conference with them, he was more troubled than before. He consulted with his companions Nebridius and Alipius; but all could not ease him. One day after dinner there came into his house a Christian courtier and captain, named Pontinian, and finding by chance St. Paul's epistles upon the board, where St. Augustine and his fellows were at play, by occasion thereof, fell into talk of spiritual matters; and among other things to recite to them the life of St. Anthony the monk of Egypt, and the infinite virtues and miracles of the same, which he had found in a book among Christians a little before, and thereby was himself converted to Christianity. Which story after St. Augustine had heard, as also that there was a monastery of those monks, without the walls of Milan, in which city this happened, and that they were nourished by St. Ambrose the bishop, whereof St. Augustine, before this, knew nothing, he was much more afflicted than before: and after Pontinian was departed, withdrawing himself aside, had a most terrible combat with himself, whereof he writes

A monastery of monks at Milan, before St. Augustine's time.

* L. 8. con. 11. † Cap. 6.

thus :* ‘What did I not say against myself in this conflict ? how did I beat and whip my own soul, to make her follow thee, O Lord ? but she held back, she refused, and excused herself ; and when all her arguments were convicted she remained in horror and fear, as of death, to be restrained from her loose custom of sin, whereby she had now consumed herself even unto death.’ After this he went into a garden with Alipius his companion, and there cried out to him ? † *Quid hoc est quod patimur ? Surgunt indocti & Cælum rapiunt ; nos cum doctrinis nostris sine corde, ecce ubi volutamur in carne & sanguine.* What is this Alipius ? what suffer we under the tyranny of sin ? unlearned men, such as St. Anthony and others, do take heaven by violence ; and we with all our learning, without hearts, behold how we lie grovelling in flesh and blood ?

And he goes forward in that place, showing the wonderful and almost incredible tribulations that he had in this fight that day. After this, he went further into an orchard, and there he had yet a greater conflict. For there all his pleasures past, presented themselves together before his eyes, saying to him, *Dimittesne nos, & a momento isto non erimus tecum ultra in æternum ? &c.* What ! wilt thou abandon us, and shall not we be with thee any more for ever, after this moment ? shall it not be lawful for thee to do this and that any more hereafter ? and then says St. Augustine ; O Lord, ‡ turn from the mind of thy servant, to think of that filth which they objected to my soul. What filth ! what shameful pleasures did they lay before my eyes ! at length he says, that, after long and tedious combats, a marvellous tempest of weeping came upon him ; and being not able to resist any longer, he ran away from Alipius, and cast himself upon the ground under a fig-tree, and gave full scope to his eyes, which presently brought forth whole floods of tears. Which, after they were a little past over, he began to speak to God in this sort, *Et tu, Domine, usquequo ? quamdiu ? quamdiu cras & cras ? quare non modo ? quare non hac hora finis est turpitudinis meæ ?* O Lord, how long wilt thou suffer me thus ? how long, how long shall I stay tomorrow ? why should I not do it now ? why should there not be an end of my filthy life, even at this instant ? And

*Mark
this, gen-
tle read-
er.*

* Cap. 7.

† Cap. 8.

‡ Cap. 12,

after this follows his final and miraculous conversion, together with the conversation of Alipius his companion, which because it is set down briefly by himself, I will recite his own words, which are as follow, immediately after those that went before

St. Augustine's final conversion by a voice from heaven. ' I did talk says he, in this sort to Almighty God, and did weep most bitterly, with a deep contrition of my heart ; and behold, I heard a voice, as if it had been of some child, singing from some house near me, and oftentimes it re-

' repeated these words : *Take up and read, take up and read* : and straightways, I changed my countenance, began to think most earnestly with myself, whether children were wont to sing any such thing, in any kind of game that they used ; but I could never remember, that I had heard any such thing before. Wherefore, repressing the force of my tears, I rose up, interpreting no other thing, but that this voice came from heaven, to bid me open the book that I had with me, which was St. Paul's epistles, and to read the first chapter that I should

St. Anthony's conversion. ' find. For I had heard before of St. Anthony,* how he was admonished to his conversion, by hearing a sentence of the gospel, which was read, when

' he by chance came into the church : and the sentence was ; *Matt. xix.* ' Go and sell all thou hast, and give to the poor ; and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.' Which saying, St. Anthony, taking as spoken to himself in particular, was presently converted to thee, O Lord, wherefore I went in haste to the place where Alipius sat, because I had left my book there when I departed. I snatched it up, and opened it, and read in silence the first chapter that offered itself in my eyes, and therein were these words : *Rom. xiii.* ' Not in banquetting, or in drunkenness ; not in wantonness, and chamber works ; not in contention and emulation, but do you put on your Lord *JESUS CHRIST*, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.'

' Further than this sentence I would not read ; neither was it needful ; for presently with the end of this sentence, as if the light of security had been poured into my heart, all the darkness of my doubtfulness fled away.

* Athanasius in vit. Ant.

‘ Whereupon putting my finger, or some other sign, which
 ‘ now I remember not, upon the place : I closed the book,
 ‘ and with a quiet countenance opened the whole matter to
 ‘ Alipius. And he, by this means, uttered also that vocation
 ‘ which now wrought in him, which I before knew not.
 ‘ He desired that he might see what I had read, and I showed
 ‘ the place to him. He considered the whole, and went
 ‘ further also than I had read. For it followed in St. Paul,
 ‘ which I knew not, take to you him that is yet weak in
 ‘ faith. Which saying Alipius applied to himself, and
 ‘ opened his whole state of doubtfulness to me. But by
 ‘ this admonition of St. Paul, he was established, and was
 ‘ joined to me in my good purpose; but calmly, and without
 ‘ any troublesome delay, according to his nature and
 ‘ manners, whereby he differed always greatly from me in
 ‘ the better part.

After this we went in together to my* mother.† We
 ‘ tell her the whole matter; she rejoices. We recite to
 ‘ her the whole order of the thing; she exults and triumphs
 ‘ and blesses thee, O Lord, who art more strong and liberal
 ‘ than we can ask or understand: for she saw now
 ‘ much more granted to her from thee, touching me, than
 ‘ she was wont to ask with her doleful and lamentable
 ‘ sighs. For thou hast converted me now to thee, that I
 ‘ neither sought for wife, nor any other hope at all of this
 ‘ world, living and abiding in that‡ rule of faith in which
 ‘ thou didst reveal me to her, so many years before. And
 ‘ thus thou didst turn her sorrow now into more abundant
 ‘ comfort, than she could wish; and into much more dear
 ‘ and chaste joy, than she could require, by my children,
 ‘ her nephews, if I had taken a wife. O Lord, I am thy
 ‘ servant, I am now thy servant, and child of thy hand-
 ‘ maid; thou hast broken my chains, and I will therefore
 ‘ sacrifice to thee a sacrifice of praise. Let my heart and
 ‘ tongue praise thee, and my bones say to thee; O Lord,
 ‘ who is like thee? Let them say it, O Lord, and do thou
 ‘ answer, I beseech thee, and say to my soul, I am thy sal-
 ‘ vation.’ Hitherto are St. Augustine’s own words.’

* Her name was Monica, a very holy woman, as he shows. † L. 9, c. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. ‡ This was the religious rule of monastical life which St. Augustine after professed. Possid. in vita Aug.

*Annotati-
ons upon
his con-
version.*

Now then, dear Christian, in the miraculous example of this famous man's conversion, there are divers things to be noted, both for our comfort, and also for our instruction. First is to be observed the great conflict he had with his ghostly enemy, before he could get out of his possession and dominion; which was so much the more, no doubt, because he was afterwards so great a pillar of God's Church; and we see that his fellow Alipius found not so great resistance because the enemy saw there was much less in him to disturb his kingdom, than in St. Augustine: which ought greatly to animate and comfort them that feel great resistance, and strong temptations against their vocation; assuring themselves, that this is a sign of more grace and favour, if they manfully go through. So was St. Paul called, as we read, Acts ix. most violently, being struck down to the ground, and made blind by Christ, before his conversion: because he was a chosen vessel, to bear Christ's name to the Gentiles.

Secondly, it is to be noted in the same example, that although this man had most strong passions before his conversion, and that in the greatest and most incurable diseases, which commonly afflict worldly men, as in ambition, covetousness, and sins of the flesh, as he himself confesses,* which maladies, possessed him so strongly, that he thought it impossible, before his conversion, ever to subdue and conquer them; yet afterwards he experienced the contrary, by the help of God's omnipotent grace. Thirdly, it is also to be considered, that he had not only the victory over these his passions afterwards, but also found great sweetness in the way of a virtuous life. For a little after his conversion he writes:† 'I could not be satisfied, O Lord, in those days, with the marvellous sweetness which thou gavest me. O how much did I weep in thy hymns and canticles, being vehemently stirred up with the voices of thy Church, singing most sweetly! those voices did run in my ears, and thy truth did melt in my heart, and thence did boil out an affection of piety, and made tears to run from me, and I was in a most happy state with them?' So he.

* L. 6. c. 6. & 15. † L. 9. c. 6.

Fourthly it is to be remembered, for our instruction and imitation, the behaviour of this holy man, concerning his vocation. First, in searching out and trying the same, by his repairing to St. Ambrose, to Simplicianus, and others, by reading of good books, frequenting of good company, and the like ; which thou oughtest also, good reader, to do, when thou feelest thyself inwardly moved, and not to lie dead as many are wont, resisting openly the Holy Ghost with all his good motions, and not so much as once giving an ear to Christ, who knocks at the door of their conscience. Moreover, St. Augustine, as we see, refused not the means to know his vocation ; but prayed, wept, and often retired himself alone from company to talk with God of that matter ; which many of us will never do, but rather to detest and fly all means that may bring us into those thoughts of our conversion. Finally, St. Augustine, after he had once seen clearly the will and pleasure of God, made no more stay upon the matter, but broke off resolutely from all the world and vanities thereof, gave over his rhetorick lecture at Milan, left all hope of promotion in the court, and betook himself to serve Almighty God thoroughly : and therefore no marvel if he received so great consolation and advancement from God afterwards, as to be so worthy a member in his holy Church. Which example is to be followed by all them that desire perfection, so far as each man's condition and state of life permit.

The deliverance of St. Augustine in trying and following God's vocation.

And here, by this occasion, I cannot but advertise thee, good reader, and also, by St. Augustine's example, forwarn thee, that whosoever means to make this resolution thoroughly must use some violence to himself at the beginning. For as a fire, if you rush in upon it with force, is easily put out ; but if you deal softly, putting it in one hand after another, you may rather hurt yourself than extinguish the same : so is it with our passions, which require fortitude, and courage for a time, especially at the beginning. Which whosoever shall use, together with the other means, that shall be set down, God willing, in the second book of his treatise, he will most certainly find that thing to be easy, which now he thinks heavy ; and that sweet, which now he esteems so unsavoury. For proof whereof, as also for con-

Violence to be used at the beginning of our conversion.

clusion of this chapter, I will allege a short discourse out of St. Bernard,* who after his way, proves the same most aptly by an authority alleged out of the holy scriptures. His words are these :

Christ says to us ; Take my yoke upon you, and you will find rest. ‘ This is a marvellous novelty, but that it ‘ comes from him who makes all things new. He that ‘ takes up a yoke, finds rest ; he that leaves all, finds a ‘ hundred times as much. He knew this well (I mean that ‘ man according to the heart of God) who said in his Psalm, ‘ *Psalm xciii.* Does the seat of iniquity cleave to thee, which ‘ makes labour in precepts ? Is not this a feigned labour, dear brethren, in a commandment, I mean a light burden, a sweet yoke, an anointed cross ? so in ‘ old times he says to Abraham, take thy son ‘ Isaac, whom thou lovest and offer him to me ‘ in sacrifice. This was a feigned labour in a ‘ commandment. For Isaac being offered, he was not killed but sanctified thereby. Thou therefore, if thou hear ‘ the voice of God within thy heart, ordering thee to offer ‘ up Isaac, which signifies joy or laughter, fear not to obey ‘ it faithfully and constantly. ‘ Whatsoever thy corrupt affection judges of the matter, be thou secure. Not Isaac, ‘ but the ram shall die for it ; thy stubbornness only, whose ‘ horns are entangled with thorns, and cannot be in thee, ‘ without the pricking of anxiety. Thy Lord does but tempt ‘ thee, as he did Abraham, to see what thou wilt do. Isaac, that ‘ is, thy joy in this life shall not die as thou imaginest, but ‘ shall live ; only he must be lifted up upon the wood, to ‘ the end thy joy may be on high, and that thou mayest ‘ glory, not in thy own flesh, but only in the cross of thy ‘ Lord, by whom thyself also art crucified : crucified I say, ‘ but crucified to the world : for, unto God thou livest still, ‘ and that much more than thou didst before.’ Hitherto St. Bernard, with those words we shall end this chapter.

*Christ's
yoke a
feigned
labour.*

* Bern. in illa verba Evangelii ; Ecce nos reliquimus omnia. ante finem.

CHAPTER III.

The third impediment which deters men from resolution in God's service; which is the fear they conceive of persecution; affliction, loss, danger, or tribulation.

THERE are many in the world, who either moved by the reasons and considerations before-mentioned, or convicted by their own experience, because they behold daily no small numbers of godly persons to live as contentedly as themselves, do yield thus much to a virtuous life, that in every deed they esteem the same to be easy and pleasant enough to such as are once entered into it: and that for their own parts they could be content to embrace and follow the same, if they could do it with quiet and peace on all sides. But yet to exhort them to it in such time or place, or with such order and circumstances, of tribulation, affliction, or persecution, that may fall upon them for the same; they think it a matter unreasonable to be demanded, *New shifts to avoid resolution.* and themselves very excusable, both before God and man, for refusing it. But this excuse, dear brother, is no better than the foregoing, of pretended difficulties; because it stands upon a false ground, and as also upon an unjust illation or consequence forced upon that ground. The ground is this, that a man may live virtuously and serve God truly, with all worldly ease, and without any affliction or persecution, which is false. For although external contradictions and persecutions, are more in one time, than in another, more in this place than in that; yet there cannot be any time or place without some both external and internal. Which although, as I have showed before in respect of the manifold helps and consolations sent from God to counterpoise them, seem not heavy nor unpleasant to the godly; yet they are in themselves both great and weighty, as would appear if they fell upon the wicked and impatient. Secondly, the illation and consequence, made upon this ground is unjust; for it alleges tribulation, as a sufficient reason to abandon God's service, which God himself has ordained for a means to the contrary effect: that is, to draw men thereby to his service, and from the service of the world. For the better clearing whereof, the matter being of very great importance, I will handle in this chapter, these four ensuing points. First, whether it

Four points to be handled in this chapter.

be ordinary for all that must be saved, to suffer some kind of persecution, tribulation, or affliction : that is, whether this be appointed an ordinary, or usual means in this life, for man's salvation. Secondly, what are the causes why God, loving us as he does, would choose and appoint these sharp means of our salvation. Thirdly, what principal reason of comfort a man may have in his tribulations and afflictions. Fourthly what is required at his hands in that state. Which four points being declared, I doubt not, but great light will appear in this whole matter, which seems to flesh and blood to be so full of darkness and impossibilities.

SECT. I.—*Whether all good men must suffer tribulations or no?*

AND touching the first, there needs little proof, because Christ himself has affirmed to his disciples, and by them to all his other servants : *John* xvi. In the world you shall have distress. And in another place : *Luke* xi. 'In your patience you shall possess your souls ;' that is to say, by suffering patiently the adversities that will be laid upon you. Which St. Paul yet utters more plainly when he says : *2 Tim.* iii. 'All who live piously in *CHRIST JESUS*, shall suffer persecution.' If all, then none can be excepted. And to signify, yet further, the necessity of this matter, both St. Paul and Barnabas also did teach, as St. Luke reports, *Acts* xiv. 'That through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God,' using the word *Oportet* which signifies a certain necessity. And Christ himself yet more plainly reveals this secret when he says to St. John the Evangelist : *Apoc.* iii. 'Those whom I love, I rebuke and chastise : ' And St. Paul yet more particularly to the Hebrews out of the third book of Proverbs, says, *Heb.* xii. 'For whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth ; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' And the same apostle urges this matter so far in that place that he affirms plainly all those to be bastards and no children of God, who are not afflicted by him in this life. The same position he holds to Timothy ; *2 Tim.* ii. If we suffer (with Christ) we shall also reign with him : and not otherwise. Wherein also holy David agrees, when he says : *Psalm*

xxxiii. 'Many are the afflictions of the just.' So that this is a common mark or seal set upon them to be discerned by.

This truth, though not so much understood, and less considered, by worldly men, yet is every where in holy scriptures, in divers manners, uttered but all to one end. As namely, by that which our Saviour said, *Matt. x.* He came not to send peace, but the sword upon earth. Also by that of St. Paul, *2 Tim. ii.* That no man is crowned except he strive lawfully. And how can we fight, if we have no enemy to oppose us? Christ signifies the same in the Apocalypse, when he repeats so often, *Apoc. ii. & iii.* that heaven is only for him that conquers. The very same is signified *Matt. viii.* by the ship whereinto Christ entered with his disciples, which was presently tossed, as if it would have sunk. This, I say, by all the ancient fathers' exposition, was a figure of the troubles and afflictions which all those should suffer who sail in the same ship with Christ our Saviour. The same is proved, where it is said in scripture, *Job vii. The life of man upon earth is a warfare. Job xiv. His life is replenished with many miseries,* even by the appointment of Almighty God after man's fall. The same is showed in that God has appointed every man to pass through the pains of death before he comes to joy. In like manner by the infinite contradiction and tribulations, both within and without, left to man in his life. As for example, within are the rebellions of his concupiscence, and other miseries of his mind, wherewith he must continually make war, if he will save his soul. Without, are the world and the devil, which never cease to assault him, now by fair means, now by foul; now by flattery, now by threats; now alluring by pleasure and promotion, now terrifying by affliction and persecution: against all which, the good Christian must resist manfully, or else he loses the crown of his eternal salvation.

The very same thing also may be showed by the examples of all the most renowned saints from the beginning, who were not only assaulted internally with the rebellion of their own flesh, but also persecuted and afflicted outwardly by divers adversities, thereby to confirm more manifestly this design of Almighty God over us. This we see in Abel *Gen. iv.* persecuted and slain by his own brother, as soon

I. Testi-
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II. The
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as ever he began to serve God sincerely. The same we see in Abraham, *Gen. xxii.* afflicted diversely after he was once chosen by Almighty God. All his children and posterity that succeeded him in God's favour, drank of the same cup; as Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and all the prophets. Of which prophets Christ himself gives testimony, *Matt. xxiii.* how their blood was shed most cruelly by the world. The affliction also of Job is wonderful, seeing the scripture affirms it to have come upon him by God's special appointment, he being a most just man. Wonderful also was the affliction of holy Tobias, who, among other calamities, *Tob. ii.* was struck blind by the falling down of swallows' dung into his eyes; of which the angel Raphael told him afterwards: *Tob. xii.* 'Because thou wast acceptable to God ' it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.' Behold the necessity of afflictions to good men. I might add to this, the example of David and others; but that St. Paul gives a general testimony of all the saints of the old Testament, saying: *Heb. xi.* That some were racked, some reproached, some whipped, some chained, some imprisoned: others were stoned, cut in pieces, tempted, and slain with the sword; some went about in hair cloth, in skins of goats, in great need, pressed and afflicted; wandering, and hiding themselves in wildernesses, in hills, in caves, and holes under ground; the world not being worthy of them. Of all which he pronounces this comfortable sentence, to be noted by all, *not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection.* That is, God would not deliver them from these afflictions in this life, to the end their resurrection and reward in the life to come, might be more glorious. So much of the saints of the old Testament.

But now in the New Testament, founded expressly upon the cross, the matter is much more plain, and that with great reason. For if Christ could not go into his glory, but by suffering, as holy scripture affirms, then by the most reasonable rule of Christ, affirming that the servant has not privilege above his master, it must needs in reason follow, that all must drink of Christ's cup, who are appointed to be partakers of his glory. And for proof hereof, look upon the dearest friends that ever our Saviour had in this life, and see whether they had part thereof or no. Old Simeon prophesied,

III. *Saints
of the new
Testament.*

Luke ii. of his mother, and told her at the beginning, that the sword of sorrow should pierce her heart; signifying thereby, the extreme affliction that she felt afterwards in the death of her son, and other miseries heaped upon her. Concerning the apostles, it is evident, that besides all their labours, wants, sufferings, persecutions and calamities, which were infinite, and in man's sight intolerable, if we believe *St. Paul's* relation of the same;* besides all this, I say, God would not be satisfied, except their blood also was spent in his service. And so we see that he suffered none of them all to die naturally, or in their beds, but only *St. John* evangelist, by a special privilege particularly granted to him from Christ; although if we consider what *St. John* also suffered in so long a life as he lived, being banished by *Domitian* to *Patmos*; and at another time, cast into a tun of boiling oil at *Rome*, as *Tertullian*† and *St. Hierom*‡ do report, we shall see that his part also was no less than others in this cup of his master. Of which cup Christ himself foretold him and his brother *James*, that both of them should taste. I might here reckon up infinite other examples, but there is no necessity; for it may suffice, that Christ has given this general rule in the New Testament: *Matt. x. He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me, is not worthy of me.* By which is resolved plainly, that there is no salvation now to be had, but only for them that take, that is, bear willingly, their proper crosses and afflictions, and therewith do follow their captain, walking on with his cross on his shoulders before them.

But here perhaps some man may say, if it be so, that no man can be saved, without a cross, that is without affliction and tribulation; how do all those that live in peaceable times and places, where there is no persecution, no trouble, no affliction, or tribulation? to which I answer: first, that if there were any such time or place, the people living therein would be in very great danger, according to the saying of the prophet, *Psalms lxxii.* 'They are not in the labour of men: neither shall they be scourged like other men. Therefore pride hath held them fast: they are covered with their iniquity and their wickedness. Their iniquity hath come forth as it were from fatness.' Besides

An objection answered.

* 1 Cor. iv. 2, Cor. iv. vi. xi. xii. Acts xx. and Rom. vii. † Tert. lib. de Præf. adv. hæret. c. 26. ‡ Hier. lib. cont. jov.

this, although such men should suffer nothing in this life, yet would they not escape all tribulation : for, (as St. Augustine proves at large,*) if they die in God's favour and free from mortal sin, they are to be saved by suffering the purging fire in the next world ; according to the saying of St. Paul, 1. Cor. iii. that such as build not gold or silver upon the foundation of faith, but wood, straw, or stubble, shall receive a detriment or damage thereof at the day of our Lord, to be revealed in fire. But yet by that fire they will be saved ; and so notwithstanding tribulation, yea, far greater than any in this life, as before out of many fathers we have alleged.

Secondly, I answer, that there is no time and place so void of tribulation, but that there is always a cross to be found for them that will take it up. For there is ever, either poverty, sickness, slander, enmity, injury, contradiction, or some other like affliction offered continually. For those men are never wanting in the world, of whom the prophet said, *Psalms* xxxvii. 'They that render evil for good, have detracted me, because I followed goodness.' At least, there are always those domestic enemies of whom our Saviour Christ forewarns us : I mean either kindred or friends, who commonly resist us, if we begin once thoroughly to serve Almighty God ; or else our own disorderly affections which are the most perilous enemies of all others, because they make war within ourselves. Again, the temptations of the world and the devil, are always attacking us, and to resist them, is much more difficult in time of peace and wealth, than in time of external affliction and persecution. For these enemies are stronger in flattery than in force ; which a holy father expresses by this parable : 'The sun and wind says he, agreed one day to try their respective strength, in taking a cloak from a traveller. And in the forenoon the wind used all the violence he could, to blow off the said cloak, but the more he blew, the faster stuck the traveller's cloak, he gathering it more closely about him. In the afternoon the sun sent forth his charming beams, and by little and little so entered into this man, that he forced him to yield, and to put off not only his cloak but also his coat. Whereby

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tion.*

* In *Psal.* lxxiii. & l. de vera & falsa pœnitent. c. 18.

' is proved, says this father, that the allurements of pleasure are more strong and harder to be resisted than the violence of persecution.' And this is proved among other arguments, by the example of king David, 2 Reg. xxi. who resisted easily many assaults of adversity; but yet fell dangerously in time of prosperity. Whereby appears, that virtuous men have no less war in time of peace, than in time of persecution. For when external persecution ceases, they turn their fight against their inward passions, which oftentimes are more troublesome than external enemies. So that there never wants occasion of bearing the cross, and suffering affliction, to him that will accept of the same. And this may suffice for the first point, to prove that every man must enter into heaven by tribulation as St. Paul says.

SECT. II. *The causes why God sends afflictions to the Godly.*

TOUCHING the second point, why God would have this to be so, it would be sufficient to answer, that it pleased him best, so without seeking any further reason of his meaning herein: even as it pleased his divine majesty, to abase his son so much, as to send him into this world to suffer and die for us, and so to enter into his glory, whereas his divine power could have wrought our salvation by infinite other means, if it had pleased him, though no way was more excellent or convenient than this. Wherefore if we will needs seek a reason, why he would have all good men to suffer and be vexed in this life; this one might be sufficient for all: that seeing we hope for so great a glory as we do, we should labour a little first for the same, and so show ourselves worthy of God's favour, and of so high an exaltation. But because it has pleased his divine majesty, not only to manifest to us his will and determination for our sufferings in this life, but also divers reasons of his most holy purpose and pleasure therein, for our further encouragement, and consolation of those that do suffer; I will in this place repeat briefly some of the same, to manifest his exceeding great love and fatherly care over us.

The first cause then, and the most principal is, to increase thereby our merit in this life, and consequently our glory in the life to come. For having appointed by his eternal wisdom and jus-

*Increases
of merit
and glory.*

tice, that none shall be crowned there, but according to the measure of their fight here : the more and greater combats he gives, together with sufficient grace to overcome them, the greater crown of glory he prepares for us, at our resurrection. St. Paul touches this cause in the words before alleged of the saints of the Old Testament ; to wit, *Heb. xi.* 'That they received no redemption from their miseries in this world, to the end they might find a better resurrection in the world to come. Christ also means this when he said, Happy are they who suffer persecution, for their's is the kingdom of heaven : happy are you, when men speak evil of you, and persecute you, &c. Rejoice and be glad, I say, for your reward is great in heaven. Hereunto also appertain all those promises of gaining life, by losing life ; of receiving a hundred for one, and the like. Hence do proceed all those large promises to virginity and chastity ; and to such as abandon all for the kingdom of heaven, to voluntary poverty, and to the renouncing of our own will by obedience. All which are great conflicts against the flesh, world, and our own sensuality, and cannot be performed but by sufferings and afflictions : Finally, St. Paul declares this matter fully, when he says, *2 Cor. iv.* 'Our present tribulation which 'is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure 'exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.'

The second cause why God appointed this, is to draw us thereby from the love of the world, which he holds for his professed enemy, as in the next chapter shall be shown at large. This cause St. Paul utters in these words, *1 Cor. xi.* 'Whilst we are judged, 'we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.' In like manner as a nurse, who, to wean her child from the love of her milk, anoints her teat with aloes, or some other such bitter thing ; so our merciful Father, that would withdraw us from worldly delights, by which numberless men perish daily, uses to send tribulation, which of all other things, has more force to work that effect : as we see in the example of the prodigal son, who could by no means be stayed from his pleasures, and brought home to his father, but only by affliction.

Thirdly, God uses tribulation, as a most present and sovereign medicine to heal us of many diseases, otherwise almost incurable. As first, of a certain blindness and careless negligence in

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the world.*

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diseases.*

our state, contracted by wealth and prosperity. In which sense, holy scripture says : *Isaiah* xxviii. 'Vexation alone shall make you understand.' And the wise man affirms, *Prov.* xxix. 'The rod and reproof give wisdom. This was shown in figure, when the sight of Tobias, *Tob* xi. was restored by the bitter gall of a fish. And it is manifest in Nabuchadonosor, Saul, Antiochus, and Manasses all which came to see their own faults by tribulation, which they would never have done in time of prosperity. The like we read of the brethren of Joseph, who falling into some affliction in Ægypt, presently entered into their own conscience, and said, *Gen.* xlii. 'We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother. And as tribulation brings this light whereby we see our own defects ; so it helps greatly to remove and cure the same ; wherein it may be well compared to the rod of Moses. For as that rod striking the hard rocks brought forth water, as the scripture says : *Exod.* xviii. so this rod of affliction, falling upon stony hearted sinners, molifies them to contrition, and oftentimes brings forth floods of tears of repentance. Wherefore, Sara in the book of Tobias says to Almighty God : *Tob.* iii. 'Blessed is thy name, O God of our fathers : who, &c. in the time of tribulation forgivest the sins of them that call upon thee.' And for like effect it is compared *Job* xxii. also to a file of iron which takes away the rust of the soul. In like manner, *Prov.* vii. to a purge that drives out corrupt humours. And finally, *Eccles.* xiv. to a goldsmith's forge, which consumes away the refuse metals, and refines the gold to its perfection. As God says to a sinner, by Isaiah the prophet, *Isa.* i. 'I will clean purge away thy dross (till it be pure) and will take away all thy sin.' And again, by Jeremiah : *Jer.* ix. 'Behold I will melt, and try them.' This he meant of the fire of tribulation, whose property is, according as the scripture says, to purge and refine the soul, as fire purges and refines gold in the furnace. For besides the purging and removing great sins, by consideration and contrition, which tribulation works as has been* showed, it purges also the rust of infinite evil passions, appetites, and humours in man : as the humour of pride, of vain-glory, of choler,

* See before Part I. Chap. I.

of delicate niceness, and a thousand more which prosperity engenders in us.

This God declares by the prophet Ezekiel, saying *Ezek. xxiv.* ‘Set it empty upon the burning coals, that it may be hot, and the brass thereof may be melted; and let the filth of it be melted, in the midst thereof, and let the rest of it be consumed.’ This is also what Elihu, one of Job’s friends means, when he says, *Job xxxiii.* That God instructs a man by discipline or correction, to the end he may turn him from the things that he has done, and deliver him from pride; which is understood of his sinful acts. He adds, a little after, the manner of his purgation, saying, his flesh being consumed by punishments, let him return again to the days of his youth. That is, all his fleshy humours and passions being now consumed by punishments and tribulations, let him begin to live again in such purity of soul as he did at the beginning of his youth, before he had contracted these evil humours and diseases by prosperity.

Neither is tribulation only a strong medicine to heal sin, to purge away the base and refuse metals in us, *A preservative.* of brass, tin, iron, lead, and dross, as Almighty God, by Ezekiel says; but also a most excellent preservative against sin for the time to come, according as holy king David said: *Psal. xvii.* ‘Thy discipline hath corrected me unto the end.’ That is to say, it has made me careful and watchful not to commit sin again, according to what the scripture says in another place, *Eccles. xxxi.* ‘A grievous sickness maketh the soul sober.’ For which cause the prophet Jeremiah calls tribulation, *Jer. i.* ‘*Virgam Vigilantem*; a rod watching: that is, as St. Jerom expounds it, a rod that makes a man watchful. God signified the same, when he said by Hosea the prophet, *Hosea ii.* ‘I will hedge up thy way with thorns;’ that is to say, I will so close thy life on every side, with the remembrance and fear of affliction, that thou shalt not dare to tread awry, lest thou treadest upon a thorn. All which holy David expresses of himself in these words: *Psalm xviii.* Before I was humbled and brought low by affliction, I did sin, and offend thee, O Lord, but after that time, I have kept thy commandments.

A prevention of future punishment. Of this also appears yet another cause, why God afflicts his elect in this life; and that is, to prevent his justice upon them in the world to come: I mean that justice which otherwise re-

mains to be executed upon every one after their departure hence, in that most grievous purging fire whereof I spoke before. Touching which St. Bernard says thus :* ‘ Oh would to God some man would now, beforehand, provide for my head abundance of water, and to my eyes a fountain of tears ; and so perchance the burning fire should take no hold, where running tears had cleansed before.’ And the reason of this is, as that holy man himself notes afterwards, because God has said by Nahum the prophet : *Nahum* i. ‘ There shall not rise a double affliction,—I have afflicted thee, and I will afflict thee no more.’ Of which tribulation of this grievous purging fire, read attentively, dear brother, that which has been alleged before at large out of St. Augustine and other ancient fathers, in the first part of this† book, and thy heart will find whereat to tremble.

*To prove
us.*

Sixthly, God sends tribulation upon his servants, to examine and prove them thereby, whether they be faithful and constant or no: that is, to make themselves and other men see and confess, how faithful or unfaithful they are. This in figure was signified *Gen.* xxvii. when Isaac would touch his son Jacob, before he would bless him. And this the scripture expresses plainly, when speaking of the tribulations laid upon Abraham, it adds, *Gen.* xxii. God tempted Abraham, by these means to prove him. And Moses said to the people of Israel, *Deut.* xiii. Thou shalt remember how thy God led thee forty years about the desert to afflict thee, and tempt thee ; to the end it might appear what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep all his commands or no. And again, a few chapters after, Your God and Lord does tempt you, to the end it may be manifest whether you love him or no, with all your heart and with all your soul. In which sense also the scripture says of Ezekias, after many praises given him, *2 Para.* xxxii. That God left him that he might be tempted, and all things might be made known that were his heart.

And that this is God’s way of proceeding with all good men king David shows in the person of all, when he says, *Psalms* lxvi. Thou hast proved us, O Lord, thou hast examined us by fire ; thou hast laid tribulation upon our

* Bern. ser 6. de Tribulat. in fine. † Part I. Chap. IX.

backs, and brought men upon our heads. And yet how well he liked this cup of tribulation, he signifies when he calls for more thereof in another place, saying, *Psalm xxv.* 'Prove me, O Lord, and try me; burn my reins and my heart.' That is, try me by the way of tribulation and persecution; search out the secrets of my heart and reins; let the world see, whether I will stick to thee in adversity or no. Thus said that holy prophet, knowing very well that which in another place the Holy Ghost declares: *Eccles. xxvii.* That the furnace trieth the potter's vessels, and the trial of affliction just men. For as the only sound vessels hold when they come to the furnace, and those which are crazed, break in pieces, so in time of tribulation and persecution, only the virtuous stand, and the counterfeit betray themselves, according to the saying of *CHRIST: Luke viii.* they 'In time of temptation fall away.'

The seventh reason why God lays tribulation upon the virtuous is, thereby to make them run to him for aid and help; even as the mother, to make her child love her more and run to her, procures the same to be made afraid and terrified by others. This God expresses plainly by the prophet Hosea, saying of them that he loved, *Hosea xi.* 'I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love: and I will be to them as one that taketh off the yoke on their jaws.' By the ropes of Adam he means affliction, whereby he drew Adam to know himself; as also appears by that which he adds of the heavy yoke of tribulation, which he will lay upon the heads and faces of his servants, as chains of love, thereby to draw them to him. This chain had drawn David to him, when he said, *Psalm xxxi.* 'Thou art my refuge from the trouble, &c.' As also those of whom Isaiah says, *Isa. xxvi.* 'Lord they have sought after thee in distress.' And those of whom David said, *Psal. xv.* 'Their infirmities were multiplied:' after that *Hosea vii.* 'In their affliction they will rise early to me.' Wherefore holy king David, desiring the good of certain men, and to win them to God, says in one of his Psalms, *Psal. lxxxii.* 'Fill their faces with shame; and they shall seek thy name, O Lord.' And this is true, as I said, in the elect and chosen servants of God. But in the reprobate, this rope draws not, this yoke holds not, nor does this

Tribulation tries.

To make men run to God.

Tribulation helps

chain of love win them to God; whereof God himself complains, saying, *Jer. ii.* ‘In vain have I struck your children, they have not received correction.’ And again, the same prophet says of them to God, *Jer. v.* ‘Thou hast struck them and they have not grieved, thou hast bruised them and they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than the rock, and they have refused to return.’

*not there.
probate.*

From this follows an eighth reason, why God brings his servants into affliction; to wit, thereby to show his power and love in delivering them. For as in this world a princely mind desires nothing more than to have an occasion whereby to show his ability and good-will to his dear friend; so God Almighty who has all occasions in his own hands, surpasses all his creatures together in greatness of love and nobility of mind, works purposely divers occasions and opportunities, whereby to show and exercise the same. So he brought the three children into the burning furnace, thereby to show his power and love in delivering them. So he brought Daniel into the lion’s den; Susanna to the point of death; Job into exceeding misery; Joseph into prison; Tobias to blindness; thereby to show his power and love in their deliverance. For this cause did *CHRIST* suffer the ship to be almost cast away, before he would awake; and St. Peter to be almost under water before he would take him by the hand.

*To mani-
fest God’s
power
and love
in deliv-
ering.*

And besides this reason, many other reasons and most comfortable causes of God’s dealing in this manner do appear. As first, that we being delivered from our afflictions, may thence take more joy and delight, than if we had never suffered the same. For as water is more grateful to the traveller, after a long drought; and a calm more pleasant to passengers, after a troublesome tempest: so is our delivery more sweet after persecution or tribulation, according to what scripture says: *Eccles. xxxv.* ‘The mercy of God is beautiful in the time of affliction, &c.’ This also our Saviour signified, when he said, *John xvi.* ‘Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.’ This David proved, when he said, *Psal. xxii.* ‘Thy rod and thy staff they have comforted me;’ that is, I take great comfort that ever I was chastised with them. And again, *Psal*

*The joy
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erance.
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tude.*

xciii. 'According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart thy comforts have given joy to my soul:' that is, for every sorrow that I received in time of affliction, I receive now a consolation after my deliverance. And again in another place, *Psal. xxx.* 'I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy:' and wherefore will he rejoice? it follows immediately, 'For thou hast regarded my humility, thou hast saved my soul out of distresses. And thou hast not shut me up in the hands of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a precious place.'

This then is one most gracious meaning of our loving and merciful Father in afflicting us for a time, to the end our joy may be the greater after our deliverance; as no doubt but it was in all those whom I have named before, who were delivered by God's mercy: I mean Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, Sidrach, Misach and Abdenago, Susanna, Job, Tobias, Peter, and the rest, who had more joy after their deliverance, than if they had never been in affliction at all. When Judith had delivered Bethulia, and returned thither with Holofernes's head, there was more hearty joy in that city, than ever there would have been, if it had not been in distress. When St. Peter was delivered out of prison by the angel, there was more joy for his deliverance in the church, than could have been, if he had never been in prison at all.

Out of this great joy results another effect of our tribulation, much more pleasing to God, and comfortable to ourselves: and that is, a most hearty and earnest thanksgiving to our Lord for our deliverance; such as the prophet used when he said, after his deliverance: *Psal. lviii.* 'But I will sing thy strength; and will extol thy mercy in the morning. For thou art become my support, and my refuge, in the day of my trouble.' Such hearty thanks and praise did the children of Israel, when they were passed over the red sea, yield to God for their deliverance, in that notable song of their's, which begins; Let us sing unto our Lord: and is registered by Moses in Exodus. *Exod. xv.* From a like hearty effect, came also those songs of Anna, Deborah, and Judith, moved thereunto by the remembrance of their past afflictions. And finally, this is one of the chief things that God esteems and desires at our hands; as he testifies by the prophet, saying: *Psal. xlix.* 'Call upon

*Thanks-
giving
for deliv-
erance*

‘ me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.’

Besides all these effects, God has yet further reason of laying persecution upon us ; as for example, to the end, that by suffering, and perceiving God’s certain assistance and consolation therein, we may come to be so hardy, bold, and constant in his service, that nothing afterwards can dismay us. Even as Moses, *Exod.* iv. although he was first afraid of the serpent that was made of his rod, and so fled away from it ; yet afterwards, when he, by God’s command had once taken it up by the tail, he feared it no more. This the prophet David expresses notably, when he says, *Psal.* xiv. ‘ Our God is our refuge and strength : a helper in troubles, which have found us exceedingly. Therefore we will not fear when the earth shall be troubled, and the mountains shall be removed into the heart of the sea.’ What greater confidence can be imagined than this.

*Embold-
ening us
in God’s
service.*

Again, by persecution and affliction, God brings his children to the exercise and perfect possession of all the holy virtues belonging to a Christian, both theological and moral. And as for theological or divine virtues, which have God himself for their next immediate object, it is evident, they being but three in number to wit, faith, hope, and charity, that all are exercised in tribulation more than otherwise. As for example : Faith is exercised by believing most assuredly the promises God has made of his help for our deliverance. Hope is exercised in conceiving, and assuring ourselves of the rewards promised to them that suffer patiently. Charity is exercised in considering the love of *CHRIST* suffering for us, and thereby provokes the afflicted to suffer again for him. As to moral virtues, though they have God also for their end, yet they have some other things belonging to man’s manners for their next and immediate object, but all finally referred to God, and are exercised likewise principally in tribulation : as prudence and temperance in discreet and moderate bearing : Fortitude, in showing stout courage for God : Obedience in conforming our wills to the will of Christ : Patience in not repining : Humility, in debasing ourselves in the sight of God. And so likewise all other virtues belonging to a good Christian, are stirred up, ex

*The exer-
cise of all
virtues.*

Faith.

Hope.

Charity.

exercised, confirmed, strengthened, and established in man by tribulation, according to the saying of St. Peter: 1 *Pet.* v.

‘ But the God of all grace, &c. when you have suffered a little, will himself perfect, and confirm, and establish you.’

Finally, God’s meaning by laying persecution and affliction upon us, is to make us perfect Christians; that is to say, like *CHRIST* our captain, whom the prophet calls, *Isa.* liii. a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity; there-

by to receive the more glory at his return to heaven, and to make more glorious all those that will take part therein.

To speak in one word, God would make us, by tribulation to become crucified Christians, which is the most honourable title that can be given to a creature in heaven or earth. Crucified, I say, and mortified to the vanities of this world, to the flesh, and to

our own concupiscence and carnal desires; but quick and full of a lively spirit, in virtue, godliness and devotion. This is the heavenly meaning of our sovereign Lord and God, in sending us persecution, tribulation, and affliction, in respect whereof, one of Job’s friends doubts not to say, *Job* v. ‘ Blessed is the man whom God correcteth.’ And *CHRIST* himself yet more expressly: *Matt.* v. ‘ Blessed are they that suffer persecution.’ If they be happy and blessed then, no doubt, the world which so much abhors all suffering, is in the wrong. Then Almighty God is but unthankfully dealt withal by many of his children, who repine at his happiness bestowed upon them, whereas indeed they should accept it with joy and thanksgiving. For proof whereof, I will now enter into the third point of this chapter, which is to examine what reasons, and causes there are, to induce us to this joyfulness and content in tribulation.

SECT. III. *Divers reasons why tribulations should be received joyfully by us, when they come.*

FIRST of all, for proof of this third point, to wit, that we ought to rejoice in tribulations, the reasons and causes, beforealleged of Almighty God’s merciful and fatherly meaning, in sending them to us, should be sufficient to comfort and content any Christian who takes delight in God’s holy providence and love towards him. For, if God sends afflictions for the increase of our glory in the life to come,

to draw us from the infection of the world, to open our eyes, and cure our diseases, to preserve our souls from sin, to prevent the pains and punishments in the world to come, to prove and try us, to make us run to him, to exhilarate us with our deliverance, to give us occasion of the exercise of all virtues, to make us like *CHRIST* our captain, as has been shown in the former point; who can be justly displeased therewith, but such as are enemies to their own eternal welfare? We see that for the obtaining of bodily health, we are content, not only to admit many bitter and unpleasant medicines, but also, if need require, to yield willingly some part of our blood to be taken from us. And how much more willingly should we do this for the eternal health and salvation of our souls? But now further: if this medicine has so many more commodities besides, as has been declared; if it serves here for the punishment, due otherwise to our sins, in far greater quantity and rigour of justice in the next world; if it makes a trial of our state, and draws us to God; if it procures God's love towards us; yields matter of joy by our deliverance; provokes us to thankfulness; emboldens and strengthens us in his service; finally, if it furnishes us with all virtues, and makes us like *CHRIST* himself crucified, then there is singular great cause why we should take comfort and consolation therein. For to come near, and to be like our Master and Saviour, is the greatest dignity and pre-eminence that can be imagined. And lastly if God's eternal wisdom has so ordained and appointed, that this shall be the ordinary means of his servants' salvation; the badge and livery of his son; the highway to heaven under the standard of his cross, then we ought not to abhor these means, to refuse this livery, to fly this way; but rather with St. Peter and St. John, *Acts v.* to esteem it a great dignity to be made worthy of the most blessed participation thereof. We see in this world, that to wear the colours of the prince, is thought a prerogative among courtiers; but to wear the robe or crown itself, is too great a dignity for any inferior subject to receive: yet *CHRIST* our lord and king is content to impart both the one and the other to us. And how then ought we to accept thereof, if we are grateful or wise.

The benefits of suffering.

A comparison.

*Special
consider-
ations of
comfort
in afflic-
tion.*

*God's
provi-
dence,
and his
love.*

These reasons, as I have said, might be sufficient to comfort and rejoice all those that are so happy as to be called to suffer affliction and tribulation for Christ's cause. But yet there are some more particular considerations besides. Whereof the first and most principal is, that this cup of persecution and affliction comes not to Christians, by chance or casualty, or by any certain general direction of stars and planets, but by the special providence and peculiar disposition of God, as our Saviour *CHRIST* shows at large in St. Matthew's gospel. *Matt. x.* That is to say this heavenly medicine or portion is made and prepared for us by the very hand and finger of Almighty God himself. Which *CHRIST* signifies expressly, when he said to his disciples, as it were in anger, *John xviii.* The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? That is, since my own father has tempered a portion for me, shall I not drink it? as if he would say, it were too much ingratitude. Secondly, it is to be noted, that the very same hand of God, which tempered the cup for *CHRIST*, who was his own Son, has also done the same for us; according to *CHRIST*'s saying, *Matt. xx.* *Of my chalice indeed you shall drink:* to wit, of the same cup which my father has tempered for me. Hence it follows, that with that hearty love with which Almighty God tempered this cup for his own most dearly beloved Son, with the same he has tempered it also for us; that is altogether for our good and his glory. Thirdly, it is to be considered, that this cup is tempered with such special care, as *CHRIST* says, that what trouble or danger soever it may seem to work, yet shall not one hair of our head perish by the same. Nay further it is to be noted, that which the prophet said, *Psal. lxxix.* 'How long wilt thou feed us with the bread of tears: and give us for our drink tears in measure:' that is, the cup of tears and tribulations shall be so tempered in measure by our heavenly physician, that no man shall have above his strength. The dose of aloes, and other bitter ingredients, shall be qualified with manna, and sufficient sweetness of heavenly consolation. '*God is faithful,*' says St. Paul, *1 Cor. x.* 'Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able.' This is a point of singular comfort, and ought always to be in our remembrance

Besides this, we must consider, that the appointing and tempering of this cup being now in the hands of *CHRIST* our Saviour, *Matt. xxviii.* by the full commission granted him from his father, and he having learned by his own suffering, as St. Paul notes, *Heb. v.* what it is to suffer in flesh and blood; we may be sure that he will not lay upon us more than we can bear. For as if a man had a father or brother that was a most skilful physician, and should receive a purge from them; he might be sure it would never hurt him, how disagreeable soever it might appear. So much and more may we be assured of this portion of tribulation ministered to us by the hand of *CHRIST*, howsoever, as St. Paul says, *Heb. xii.* it seems to us unpleasant for the present.

All tribulations measured unto us by Christ.

A comfortable comparison.

But above all other comfortable thoughts, this is the greatest and most full of consolation, to consider that he divides this cup only out of love, as he himself protests, and St. Paul proves. *Heb. xii.* That is, he gives out portions of his cross, the richest jewel that he makes account of, as worldly princes do their treasure, to none but their chosen and select friends; and among them also, not equally to each man, but to every one a measure, according to the measure of good will and special affection, wherewith he loves them. This is evident by the foregoing examples, of his dearest friends most of all afflicted in this life; that is to say, they received greatest portions of his treasure, 'because his love and good-will was greatest towards them. This also may be seen manifestly in the example of St. Paul, *Acts ix.* of whom, after that Christ had said to Ananias, he is a vessel of election to me; he gives immediately the reason thereof: *For I will show him how great things he must suffer for the sake of my name.* Lo here, because he was a chosen vessel, therefore he must suffer great matters for Christ. Does not then the measure of his suffering go according to the measure of God's love for us? surely St. Peter knew well how the matter went, and therefore he writes thus: *1 Pet. ii.* If you living well, do suffer with patience, this is a grace, or privilege, before God. And again: *1 Pet. iv.* 'If you be reproach-

God's measure of tribulation goes according to the measure of his love.

which is of the honour, glory, and power of God, and that which is his spirit resteth upon you.'

Can there possibly be any greater reward promised to man, or any more excellent dignity, than to be made partaker of the honour, glory, and power of Jesus Christ? is it a wonder now, if Christ said, *Matt. v.* Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you? is it marvellous if he said, *Luke vi.* Be glad and rejoice in that day! is it wonderful, if St. Paul said, *2 Cor. xii.* That he took great pleasure, and did glory in his infirmities or afflictions, in his reproaches, in his necessities, in his persecutions, in his distresses for Christ! is it marvellous, if St. Peter and St. John, being reproached and beaten at the judgment-seat of the Jews, *Acts v.* went away rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus? is it a wonder, if St. Paul accounted this such a high privilege given to the Philippians, when he said, *Phil. i.* 'For to you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake: having the same conflict as that which you have seen in me, and now have heard of me!' all this is no wonder, I say, seeing that suffering with Christ, and bearing the cross with Christ, is as great a preferment in the court of heaven, as it would be in an earthly court for the prince to take off his own garment, and put it on the back of one of his servants.

Now from this follows another consequence, of singular consolation in time of affliction: and it is, that tribulation, especially when grace is also given to bear it patiently, is a great conjecture of our predestination to eternal life; and all the arguments we have used, insinuate this; as on the contrary, to live in continual prosperity, is a dreadful sign of everlasting reprobation. This point is marvellously proved by St. Paul to the Hebrews, *Heb. xii.* and greatly urged. And Christ signifies this plainly in St. Luke, when he says, *Luke vi.* 'Blessed are ye that weep now: for you shall laugh.' And on the other side: 'Wo to you that laugh now: for you shall mourn and weep.' And yet, the saying of Abraham to the rich man in hell, or rather Christ's words parabolically attributed to Abraham, confirms this matter more vehemently than all this. For he says to the rich man who complains of his torments, *Luke xvi.*

The great dignity of suffering.

Tribulation a sign of predestination.

‘ Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life time, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.’ He does not say, as St. Bernard well, *Rapuisti*, thou didst take by violence, but *Recepisti*, thou didst receive. And yet, this is now objected against him for a cause of his torment and rejection; not because the very enjoying of prosperity or riches is a sufficient cause of damnation in itself; nor was it in this glutton, for it is alledged in the gospel before, that he would give nothing to Lazarus; but it is an evil and fearful sign of reprobation to live still in prosperity; as on the contrary, it is of predestination, to be much exercised in tribulation. Holy David handles this matter in divers places. And after long search, and much admiration, his conclusion concerning wicked mens’ prospering above others in the world, is this: *Psalm lxxii.* ‘ But indeed for deceits thou hast put it to them: when they were lifted up thou hast cast them down.’ As if he should say, the prosperity of sinners seems to be a snare set by you, O Lord, to entangle them; for by thus exalting them you have more effectually wrought their ruin, throwing them down by a sentence of everlasting damnation.

This is illustrated by a comparison of St. Gregory’s.* He says, the oxen appointed to the slaughter are let loose to feed at their pleasure, and the other kept under daily labour of the yoke, and so it fares with evil and good men. To conclude, the stones that must serve for the glorious temple of Solomon, 3 *Reg. vi.* were hewn, beaten, and polished without the church, at the quarry-side, that no stroke of a hammer might be heard within the temple. St. Peter says, 1 *Pet. ii.* That the virtuous are chosen stones to be placed in the spiritual building of God, in heaven, where there is no beating, no sorrow, no tribulation. Here then in this life we must be polished, hewn, and made fit for that glorious temple; here, I say, in the quarry of this world; here we must be fined, here we must feel the blow of the hammer, and be most glad when we hear or feel the same; because it is a sign of our election to that glorious house of God’s eternal mansion.

A comparison of St. Gregory’s

* Com. in Job.

Besides this matter of predestination and election, there is yet another thing of no small comfort to the godly when afflicted, founded on the words of Almighty God: *Psal. xc. I am with him in tribulation.* Whereby is promised the company of God himself in affliction and persecution. This is a singular motive, says St. Bernard, to stir up men to embrace tribulation, seeing that even in this world, men venture to do many hard and difficult things for the sake of company. Joseph was carried captive into Ægypt, and God went down with him as the scripture says; *Gen. xxxvii.* yea, even more than that, it is said, *Sap. x.* that he went into the pit, and was in bands with him. Sadrac, Misach, and Abdenago, were cast into a burning furnace, and presently there was a fourth seen that did bear them company; of whom Nebuchodonosor says thus, *Dan. iii.* Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered: True, O king. Behold says he, I see four men loose, and walking in the midst of the fire; and the form of the fourth is like the son of God. Christ restored, as he passed by, *John ix.* a certain beggar to his sight, who had been blind from his nativity: for which thing the man being soon after called in question, and speaking somewhat in the praise of Christ for the benefit received, he was cast out of the synagogue by the Pharisees. Which Christ hearing sought him out presently, and comforting his heart, bestowed upon him the light of mind, of much more importance than that of the body given to him before. By this and the like examples it appears, that a man is no sooner in affliction and tribulation for justice sake, but presently Christ is at hand to bear him company; and if his eyes were opened, as the eyes of Eliseus's disciples were, to see his companions, *2 Reg. xvi.* the troops of angels I mean, which attend upon their Lord in this his visitation, no doubt but his heart would be greatly comforted therewith.

The assistance of God's grace in tribulation.

But that which the eye cannot see, the soul feels; that is, she feels the assurance of God's grace in the very depth of all tribulations. This he has promised again and again, this he has sworn, and this he performs most faithfully to all those that suffer meekly for his name. This St. Paul most certainly assured himself of when he said, That

he did glory in all his infirmities and tribulations, to the end that the virtue of Christ might dwell in him: that is to say, that Christ should assist him more abundantly with his grace; for when I am most in infirmity, then am I most strong, says he. That is, the more tribulations and afflictions are laid upon me, the more potent is the aid of Christ's grace unto me. And therefore the same apostle writes thus of himself, and all the other apostles together: *2 Cor. iv.* 'In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed: we are straitened: but are not destitute: we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken: we are cast down, but we perish not.' This then ought to be a most sure and secure staff in the hands of all afflicted Christians, that whatsoever befalls them, death or life, yet the grace of Almighty God will never fail to support, and protect them; for that saying of St. Augustine,* so often repeated by him in his works, that God never forsakes any man, except he be rejected and forsaken by man first, is most true and certain.

For the last reason of comfort in affliction, I will join two things together of great force and efficacy in this matter. The first whereof is, the expectation of reward; the other is the shortness of time wherein we have to suffer. Both are touched by St. Paul in one sentence, when he says, *2 Cor. iv.* 'For our present tribulation (in this world) which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory in the height of heaven. By momentary, he shows the little time we have to suffer; and by eternal weight of glory, he expresses the incomprehensible greatness of the reward prepared in heaven for recompence of that suffering. Christ also joins both these comforts together, when he says, *Apoc. xxii.* 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.' In his promising *to come quickly*, he signifies that our tribulation will not last long; and by saying that *he brings his reward with him*, he assures us, that he will not come empty hand, but ready furnished, to recompence our labour thoroughly. And what greater means of encouragement, dear brother, could he use than this? if a man did bear a heavy burden,

* Ser. 8. de Temp. & de nat. & gr. cap. 16.

A compa-
rison. yet if he was sure to be well paid for his labour, and that he had but a little way to carry it, he would strain himself to go through to his way's end rather than, by sparing so short a labour, to lose so large and so present a reward. This is our Lord's most merciful dealing with us, to comfort us in our afflictions, and to animate us to hold out manfully for a time, though for the present the weight seem heavy on our shoulders. 'The coming of our Lord is even at hand, and the judge is even before the gates, who will refresh us, and wipe away all our tears, and place us in his kingdom to reap joy without end. And then we shall find the saying of holy St. Paul, *Rom. viii. 18.* to be true, *That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.* That is to say, whatsoever we can suffer in this world is but a small price to purchase that eternal weight of glory we hope to enjoy in heaven. Which thought alone ought to be a sufficient comfort to us amidst whatsoever tribulation and afflictions.

SECT. IV. *How we must behave ourselves in time of tribulation.*

HAVING thus declared the first three points set down before, there remains only to say a word or two of the fourth; which is, what we have to do on our parts in time of persecution and affliction, to reap solid fruit from them. And this might be dispatched in one word, saying only that we are to conform ourselves to the holy will and pious meaning of Almighty God, of which we spoke before when we showed the reasons for which he permits us to be afflicted. But yet for a more easy and better remembrance of the same, I will briefly run over the principal advertisements, which spiritual men give, concerning this matter.

To rejoice. And first of all, it cannot be denied, but that we should endeavour to aspire to that high perfection, whereof our Saviour speaks, and whereunto he exhorts us, when he says, *Luke vi. Be glad and rejoice in your adversities;* but yet, if our corrupt and lumpish nature will not permit us to arrive to this so great perfection, we ought at least to perform that which the apostle so expressly commands, when he says, *James i. 'My brethren count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptation.*

that is, if we cannot rejoice at it indeed, yet we ought to think it a matter in itself worthy of rejoicing; reprehending ourselves, because we cannot reach it. And if we cannot mount thus high, as indeed we ought to do, yet in all afflictions we ought to remember what another apostle says, *Heb. x.* 'Patience is necessary for you, that doing the will of God you may receive the promise.'

Secondly, we ought to do as the apostle did, when they were in the most terrible tempest at sea, Christ being with them, but yet asleep. That is, we must go and awake him; we must cry out to him with the prophet: *Psalms xliii.* *Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise and cast us not off to the end.* This awaking of Christ pleases him wonderfully as has been shown before; but especially if it be done with that assured confidence of true affectionate children, wherewith St. Mark describes the apostle to have awakened Christ. For the words are these: *Mark iv.* *Master, doth it not concern thee, that we perish?* as if he would say, are not we thy disciples and servants? art not thou our Lord and Master? is not the cause thine? is not all our trust and hope in thee? how chances it then that thou sleepest and sufferest us to be thus tossed and tumbled, as if we belonged not to thee? With this zeal and affection prayed holy Isaiah, when he said, *Isaiah lxiii.* Look down from heaven, and behold from thy holy habitation and the place of thy glory: where is thy zeal, and thy strength, the multitude of thy bowels, and of thy mercies? (have they shut themselves up now towards us?) Thou art our father; and Abraham hath not known us, and Israel hath been ignorant of us; thou, O Lord, art our father, &c. Return for the sake of thy servants, the tribes of thy inheritance. Thus, I say, we must call upon God; thus we must awake him, when he seems to sleep in our miseries: with earnest, with devout, with continual prayer, always having in our mind that most comfortable parable of Christ, wherein he says, *Luke xi.* That if we should come to our neighbour's door, and knock at midnight, to borrow some bread, when he and his children are in bed, and most loth to rise; yet if we continue asking, and still beating at the door, though he were not our friend, he would rise at length and give us our demand; thereby at least to be rid of our importunity. And

*To come
to God by
fervent
prayer.*

how much more will God do this, says Christ, who both loves us, and protects us most mercifully.

But yet here is one thing to be noted in this matter ;
An impor- and that is, that Christ suffered the ship almost
tant note. to be covered with waves, as the evangelist says,

God per- *Matt.* viii. before he would awake ; thereby to
mits temp- signify that the measure of temptation is to be left only to
tations to himself. It is sufficient for us to rest upon the apostle's
grow great words : *Heb.* x. ' God is faithful, who will not suffer you
before he to be tempted above that which you 'are able.' We must
remedies not examine, or mistrust his doings ; we must not
them. inquire why he does this ; or why he suffers that,
 or how long he will permit these evils to reign ;

God is a great God in all his doings ; and when
 he sends tribulation, he sends a great deal to-
 gether, to the end he may show his great power
 in delivering us, and recompense it with great
 measure of comfort. His temptations oftentimes go very
 deep, thereby to try the very hearts and reins of men. He
 went far with Elias, when he caused him to fly into a
 mountain, and there desirous of death, to say, *3 Reg.* xix.
 They have killed all thy prophets, O Lord, and I am left
 alone, and now they seek to kill me also. He went far
 with David, when he made him cry out, *Psalms* xxx. ' I
 have said in the excess of my mind, I am cast away from
 ' the sight of thy eyes.' God went far with the apostles,
 when he forced one of them to write, *2 Cor.* i. ' *We will*
not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our tribula-
tion which happened in Asia, that we were pressed above
measure, above our power, so that it was tedious unto us
even to live. But yet above all others, he went furthest
 with his own dear son, when he constrained him to utter
 those piteous and most lamentable words upon the cross :
Matt. xxvii. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken*
me? Who can now complain of any proof or temptation
 whatsoever laid upon him, seeing God would go so far with
 his own dear and only son.

Hence then ensues the third thing necessary
Magnan- for us in tribulation : which is magnanimity
imity with grounded upon a strong and invincible faith of
a strong God's assistance, and of our final deliverance,
faith. how long soever he delays the matter, and how
 terrible soever the storm seems for the time. This God

requires at our hands, as may be seen by the examples of his disciples, who cried not, *We perish*, before the waves had covered the ship, as St. Matthew writes: *Matt. viii.* And yet Christ said to them, *Luke viii.* Where is your faith? St. Peter also was not afraid till he was almost under water, as the same evangelist records; and yet Christ reprehended him saying, *Matt. xiv.* *O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?* What then must we do in this case, dear brother? Surely, we must put on that magnanimous faith of valiant king David, who upon the most assured trust he had of God's assistance, said *Psal. xvii.* And through my God I shall go over a wall. Of which invincible faith, St. Paul was also, when he said, *Phil. iv.* I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me. Nothing is impossible, nothing is too hard for me, with his assistance. We must be as the scripture says, *Prov. xxviii.* like the just, bold as a lion, which is without dread; that is, we must not be astonished at any tempest, or any adversity; we must say with the prophet David, who was experienced in these matters: *Psal. iii. &c.* *I will not fear thousands of the people surrounding me.* If I should walk amidst the shadows of death, I will not fear. If whole armies should stand against me, yet my heart should not tremble. My hope is in God, and therefore I will not fear what man can do to me. God is my aid, and I will not fear what flesh can do to me. God is my helper, and protector, and therefore I will despise and condemn my enemies. And another prophet in like sense, *Isaiah xii.* *Behold, God is my Saviour I will deal confidently and will not fear.* These were the speeches of holy prophets, of holy saints, of men that knew well what they said, and had often tasted of affliction themselves; and therefore could say, by their own experience, how infallible God's assistance is therein.

To this supreme courage, magnanimity, and *Christian fortitude*, the scripture exhorts us, when it says, *Eccls. x.* *If the spirit of him that hath power ascend upon thee leave not thy place.* And again, another scripture says, *Eccls. iv.* *Unto death fight for justice, and God will overthrow thy enemies for thee.* And Christ himself, yet more effectually recommends this matter, in these words: *Luke xii.* *I say to you, my friends: Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after this have no more that they can do.* And St. Peter adds further, *1 Pet.*

iii. *If also you suffer any thing for justice sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their terror, and be not troubled.* That is, do not only not fear them, but do not so much as be troubled for all that flesh and blood can do against you, when you stand in a good cause.

Christ goes further in the Apocalypse, and uses marvellous speeches to entice us to this fortitude. For thus he speaks : *Apoc. ii.* He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God. These things saith they first and the last, who was dead, and liveth : I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty , but thou art rich ; and thou art blasphemed by those who say they are Jews, and are not ; but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer ; behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried : and you shall have tribulation ten* days. Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life. He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith to the churches : He that shall overcome, shall not be hurt by the second death. And he that shall overcome, and shall keep my words unto the end, to him I will give power over the nations, even as I received from my father : and I will give him the morning star. He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my father, and his angels. Behold, I come quickly : hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. He that shall overcome, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more : and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem. To him that shall overcome, I will grant to sit with me in my throne, as I also have overcome : and have sat with my father in his throne.

Hitherto are the words of Christ to St. John. And in the end of the same book, after he had described the joys and glory of heaven at large, he concludes thus : *Apoc. xxi.* And he who sat on the throne said, &c. *Write for these words are most faithful and*

* Those ten days some think to have been the ten general persecutions within the first three hundred years after Christ.

true. He that shall overcome shall possess these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But to the fearful and unbelieving, &c. Their portion shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. *fear persecution.*

Here now we see both allurements and threats; both good and evil, life and death; the joys of heaven, and the burning lake of hell proposed unto us. We may stretch out our hands to which we will. If we fight and conquer, as by God's grace we may, then we are to enjoy the promises laid down before. If we show ourselves either unbelieving in these promises, or fearful to take the fight in hand, being offered unto us; then we fall into the danger of the contrary threats: even as St. John affirms in another place, *John xii.* that certain noblemen did, among the Jews, who believed in Christ, but yet durst not confess him for fear of persecution.

Hence follows, that another virtue also is most necessary in all tribulation and affliction; and that is, a strong and firm resolution to stand and go through what opposition or contradiction soever we find in the world, either from fawning flattery, or from persecuting cruelty. This the scripture teaches, crying out unto us, *Eccles. ix.* Be firm and immoveable, in the way of our Lord. And again: *1 Cor. xvi.* *Stand fast in the faith, do manfully and be strengthened.* And yet further, *Trust in God, and stay in thy place.* And finally, *Eccles. xi.* *You therefore take courage, and let not your hands be dissolved, for there shall be reward to your work.* *A firm resolution.*

The three children Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago, had this resolution, when having heard the flattering speech and threats of cruel Nabuchadonosor, they answered with a quiet spirit: *Dan. iii.* We have no occasion to answer thee concerning this matter. For behold our God is able, if he will, to save us from the furnace of burning fire, and to deliver us out of thy hands, O king. But if he will not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not worship thy gods, nor adore the golden statue which thou hast set up. *The constancy & firm resolution of Saints.*

St. Peter and St. John, had this resolution, when being so often brought before the council, and both commanded, threatened, and beat, to the end they should talk no more of Christ, they answered still, *Acts iv.* *If it be just in the*

sight of God, to hear you, rather than God, judge ye. St. Paul also had the same, when being requested with tears by the Christians in Cæsarea, that he would forbear to go to Jerusalem, because the Holy Ghost had revealed the troubles which awaited him there; he answered, *Acts xxi.* What do you mean weeping and afflicting my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. And in the *St. Paul's resolution.* epistle to the Romans, he yet further expresses this resolution of his, when he says: *Rom. viii.*

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us? who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is CHRIST JESUS our Lord.

Of martyrs and confessors. Finally, this was the resolution of all the holy martyrs and confessors, and other servants of God; whereby they have withstood the temptations of the devil, the allurements of flesh and blood, and all the persecutions of tyrants, exacting things unlawful at their hands. I will allege one example more out of holy scripture, and that before the coming of Christ, but yet nigh the same; and therefore no wonder as the holy fathers do note, that it had some heat of Christian fervour and constancy towards martyrdom. The example is wonderful, because in man's sight it was but for a small matter required at their hands by the tyrant's command; that is, only to eat a piece of swine's flesh. For thus it is recorded in the scripture.

It happened that seven brethren were apprehended together in those days, and brought with their mother, to the tyrannical king Antiochus, and there compelled, with torments of whips and other instruments, to eat of swine's flesh against the law. At which time one of them, who was the eldest, said, *1 Mac. vii.* What wouldst thou ask, or learn of us? we are ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of God. Then the king being angry, commanded the frying pans, and brazen cauldrons to be made hot: which forthwith

A marvelous constancy of the seven

being heated, he commanded to cut out the tongue of him that had spoken first : and the skin of his head being drawn off, to chop off also the extremities of his hands and feet, the rest of his brethren, and his mother looking on. And when he was now maimed in all parts, he commanded him, being yet alive, to be brought to the fire, and to be fried in the frying-pan : and while he was suffering therein long torments, the rest, together with the mother, exhorted one another to die manfully, &c. So when the first was dead, &c. they brought the next, &c. and when they had pulled off the skin of his head with hair, they asked him if he would eat, before he was punished throughout the whole body in every limb. But he answered in his own language, and said, I will not do it : Wherefore he also, in the next place received the torments of the first : After him, the third was made to put forth his tongue, and courageously stretched out his hands : and said with confidence : These I have from heaven, but for the laws of God I now despise them, because I hope to receive them again from him.

*Maccabees
and their
mother.*

*A worthy
saying.*

And after they had thus tormented and put to death six of the brothers, every one most constantly professing his faith, and the joy he had to die for God's cause ; there remained only the youngest, whom Antiochus (being ashamed that he could pervert none of the former) endeavoured by all means possible to draw from his purpose, by promising and swearing that he should be a rich and happy man, and one of his chief friends, if he would yield. But when the youth was nothing moved therewith, Antiochus called the mother to him, and exhorted her to save her son's life, by persuading him to yield ; which she feigned to do, thereby to have liberty to speak to her son, she made a most vehement exhortation to him in the Hebrew tongue, to stand to his faith and to die rather than to defile his conscience ; which speech being ended, the youth cried out with a loud voice, and spoke this noble sentence worthy to be remembered : *Quem sustinetis ? non obtempero præcepto Regis sed præcepto Legis* : for whom do you stay ? I will not obey the command of the king, but the commandment of the law of God. Whereupon both he and his mother were presently, after many torments consumed.

*A noble
example
of a mo-
ther.*

This then is the constant and immoveable resolution

which a Christian should have in all adversities of this life. Whereupon St. Ambrose says thus.* ‘ Our mind is to be prepared with grace, to be exercised, and to be so established in constancy, that it may not be troubled with any terrors, broken with any adversities, or yield to any punishments, or torments whatsoever.’

How a man may come to an invincible resolution.

If you ask me here how a man can come to this steadfast resolution : I answer, that St. Ambrose in the same place shows two ways how to obtain the same. The one is, to remember the endless and intolerable pains of hell, if we yield against our conscience for fear. The other is, to think of the unspeakable glory of heaven, if we persevere constant. Whereunto I will add the third, which, with a noble heart, may perhaps prevail as much as either of them both ; and that is, to consider what others have suffered before us, especially Christ himself, and that only out of mere love and affection for us. We see that in this world, loyal subjects glory in nothing more than in their dangers or hurts suffered in battle for their prince, though he never received a blow for them again. What then would they do, if their prince had been afflicted voluntarily for them, as Christ has been for us ? but if this great example of Christ seems to thee over-hard or too high to imitate, look upon some of thy brethren before thee, made of flesh and blood as thou art ; see what they have suffered before they could enter into heaven ; and think not thyself hardly dealt withal, if thou art also called to suffer a little.

The sufferings of the apostles.

St. Paul writes of all the apostles together. Even to this hour, says he, 1 *Cor.* iv. we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode ; and we labour working with our own hands ; we are reviled, and we bless : we are persecuted and we suffer it. We are ill-spoken of, and we intreat : we are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even till now. That is though we have wrought so many miracles, and converted so many millions of people ; yet even to this day are we thus used. And in the second epistle describing yet further their lives, he says, 2 *Cor.* vi. Let us exhibit ourselves as the minis-

* L. 1. Offi. c. 38.

ters of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in long-suffering, in suavity, in the Holy Ghost, &c. And of himself in particular he says, 2 Cor. xi. I am the minister of Christ, in many more labours, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the midst of the sea: In journeys often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren: In labour and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness: Besides those things that are without: my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches.

The particular sufferings of St. Paul.

By this we may see now, whether Christ's holy apostles taught us more by words, than they showed by their own example, about the necessity of suffering in this life. Christ might have provided for them if he would, at least, things necessary for their bodies, and not have permitted them to have come into these great extremities of wanting clothes to their backs, meat to their mouths, and houses to put their heads in. He that gave them that authority to do so many other miracles, might have suffered them also to have procured sufficient maintenance for their bodies, which would be the first miracle that worldly men would work, if they had leave and authority. Christ might have said to St. Peter, when he sent him to take his tribute from out of the fish's mouth, take so much more as will suffice for your necessary expenses, when you travel over foreign countries; or at least, so much as would serve for the maintenance of his dear mother the Blessed Virgin committed to the keeping of St. John, as poor as herself. But nothing of this would he do nor yet diminish the great afflictions which I have shown before, though he loved them as dearly as he loved his own soul. All which was done, as St. Peter interprets, 1 Pet. ii. to give us example what to follow, what to look for, what to desire, what to comfort ourselves in, amidst the greatest of all tribulations.

How Christ suffered the apostles to want.

A notable exhortation of St. Paul. St. Paul uses this as a principal consideration when he writes thus to the Hebrews, *Heb. xii.* upon the recital of the sufferings of other Saints before them. Therefore we also, brethren, says he, having so great a cloud of witnesses that have suffered before us, laying aside every weight, and the sin that surrounded us, by patience let us run to the fight proposed unto us : Looking on JESUS the author and finisher of faith, who having joy proposed unto him, underwent the cross, despising the shame, and sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon him who endureth such opposition from sinners against himself: that you be not wearied fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin; And you have forgotten the consolation which speaking to you as to children, saying, *Prov. iii.* ‘ My son neglect not the discipline of the Lord : neither be thou wearied whilst thou art rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth : and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.’ Persevere under correction. God offereth himself to you as to sons. For what son is he whom the Father doth not correct? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are made partakers, then are you bastards and not sons, &c. Now no chastisement for the present seemeth to bring with it joy, but sorrow : but afterwards it will yield, to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruits of justice. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet, &c. That is, take courage, and go forward valiantly under the cross laid upon you. This was the exhortation of this holy captain to his countrymen, the Jews, soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The exhortation of St. James. St. James, uses another exhortation in his catholic epistle to all Catholics, *James v.* not much different from this. Be patient therefore brethren, says he, till the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, patiently bearing till he receive the early and the latter rain. Be you therefore also patient, and strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth near. Grudge not brethren, one against another, that you may not be judged. Behold the judge standeth before the door. Take for an example of suffering evil, of labour and pa-

tience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord : *Behold we account them blessed who have suffered.* You have heard of the patience of Job; and you have seen, the end of the Lord, that the Lord is merciful and compassionate. So he. I might here alledge many things more out of the holy scriptures, to this purpose, *The conclusion.* for they are most copious in this matter. And indeed, if all that is contained therein, especially in the new testament, should be put together and laid before us, it would, in effect, yield us almost nothing else, but touching the cross, and patiently bearing of tribulation in this life. But I must end, for this chapter grows too long, as the other did before. And therefore I will only, for my conclusion, set down the confession and most excellent exhortation of old Mathias in the time of the cruel persecution of Antiochus against the Jews. The story is thus reported in the scripture. *Mach. ii.*

At that time the officers of Antiochus said to Mathathias, thou art a ruler, and honourable, and great man in this city, and adorned with sons and brethren. Therefore come thou first, and obey the king's commandment, as all nations have done : and the men of Juda, and they that remain in Jerusalem : and thou and thy sons shall be in the number of the king's friends, and enriched with gold and silver, and many presents. Then Mathathias answered and said with a loud voice : although all nations obey king Antiochus, so as to depart every man from the service of the law of his fathers, and consent to his commandments ; I and my sons, and my brethren will obey the law of our fathers. God be merciful unto us, &c. Now the days drew near that Mathathias should die, and he said to his sons : Now hath pride and chastisement gotten strength, and the time of destruction and the wrath of indignation : Now, therefore, O my sons, be zealous for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers. And call to remembrance the works of the fathers, which they have done in their generations : and you shall receive great glory, and everlasting name. Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, *Gen. xxii.* and it was reputed to him unto justice ? Joseph in the time of his distress kept the commandment, *Gen. xli.* and he was made lord of Egypt. Phinees our father, by being fervent in the zeal of God, *Num. xxv. re.*

*The confession
and exhortation
of Mathathias.*

ceived the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. Josue whilst he fulfilled the word, *Josue*, i. was made ruler in Israel. Caleb for bearing witness before the congregation, *Num.* xiv. received an inheritance. David, by his mercy, *2 Reg.* ii. obtained the throne of an eternal kingdom. Elias, while he is full of zeal for the law, *4 Reg.* ii. was taken up into heaven. Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael by believing, *Daniel* iii. were delivered out of the flame. Daniel, in his innocency, *Dan.* iv. was delivered out of the mouth of the lions. And thus consider through all generations; that none that trust in him fail in strength.

A worthy saying. *And fear not the words of a sinful man, for his glory is dung and worms: to-day he is lifted up, and to-morrow he shall not be found, because he is returned into his earth, and his thought is come to nothing. You therefore, my sons, take courage, and behave manfully in the law, for by it you shall be glorious.* Hitherto are the words of scripture, which shall suffice for the end of this chapter; and the rather, because in another chapter.* I will lay down for our instruction and encouragement, many more examples of true resolution, in divers of God's servants.

CHAPTER IV.

The fourth and greatest impediment that hinders resolution: to wit, the love and respect, which men have for the pleasures, commodities, and vanities of this world.

As the former impediments which now, by God's grace, we have removed, are indeed great obstacles to many men, in regard to the resolution we talk of; so this that we now take in hand, is not only of itself a strong impediment, but also a general cause, and as it were, a common ground to all other impediments that are or may be. For if a man could touch the hidden pulse of all such as refuse, or neglect, or defer to make this resolution; he would find the true cause, and origin thereof, to be the love and respect which they have for this world, whatsoever excuse they pretend besides.

The world, the ground of all other impediments.

* Infr. c. 5.

The noblemen of Jewry pretended fear to be the cause, why they could not resolve to confess Christ openly ; but St. John that felt their pulses, and knew their diseases, declares the true cause to have been, *John* xii. ‘ Because ‘ they love the glory of men, more than the glory of God.’ Demas that forsook St. Paul in his bands, even a little before his death, pretended another cause of his departure to Thessalonica, but St. Paul says it was, *2 Tim.* iv. Because he loved this world. So that this world is a general and universal impediment, and more largely dispersed in men’s hearts, than outwardly appears ; because it brings forth divers other excuses, thereby to cover itself in the people ; where it abides.

This may be confirmed by that most excellent parable of our Saviour Christ, recorded by three evangelists,* concerning the three sorts of men which are to be damned, and the three causes of their damnation ; whereof the third and last, and most general, including as it were, both the two former, is the love of this world. For the first sort of men there mentioned, are compared to a highway, wherein all seed of life that is sown either withers presently, or else is eaten up by the birds of the air, which is, as Christ expounds it, by the Devils, in such careless men as contemn whatsoever is said to them ; such are infidels, heretics, and other such like obstinate and contentious people. The second sort of reprobate people are compared to the rocky grounds in which, for want of deep root, the seed that falls continues not ; and by this are signified light and inconstant persons, that now are fervent, and immediately grow cold again ; and so, in time of temptations, they are gone, says Christ. The third sort are compared to a field, wherein the seed of life grows up, but yet there are so many thorns about the same (which Christ our Saviour expounds to be the cares, troubles, miseries, and deceitful vanities of this life) that the good corn is choked up, and so brings forth no fruit at all. By which last words he signifies, that wheresoever his doctrine is taught and grows up, and yet brings not forth due fruit : that is to say, wheresoever his faith is planted, received and professed, as it is among Christians, and brings

The exposition of the parable of the seed, and of four sorts of people signified therein.

* Matt. xiii. Mark iv. and Luke vii.

not forth a virtuous life, holy conversation, good works, and due service of God, correspondent to this seed : there the principal cause is, because it is choked with the love and care of this present world.

The importance of this parable and circumstances thereof. This is a parable of marvellous great importance, as may appear ; both because Christ, after the recital thereof, cried out with a loud voice, *Matt. xiii.* ‘ He that hath ears to hear, let him hear : as also, because he expounded it himself in secret only to his disciples : and principally because before the exposition thereof, he used such a solemn preface, saying, *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given ; for they seeing, do not see ; and hearing, do not hear, nor understand :* whereby our Saviour signifies, that the understanding of this parable above others, is of singular importance, for the conceiving of the true mysteries of the kingdom of heaven : and that many are blind who seem to see, and many are deaf and ignorant, who seem to hear and know ; for they understand not well the mysteries of this parable : *Blessed are your eyes because they do see, and your ears because they do hear.* After which words, he begins his exposition with this admonition : *Hear you therefore, and understand this parable of the sower.*

And seeing that this parable does contain as much as may be, or is needful to be said, for the removing of this great and dangerous impediment of worldly love against the service of God, I design to insist only upon the explication thereof in this place ; and will declare the force and truth of certain words uttered here by Christ concerning the world and worldly vanities, and how warily they are to be used by us. And for some order and method, I will draw all to these six principal points or heads that do ensue. First, how, and in what sense, all this whole world and commodities thereof are mere vanities in themselves, and of no value, as Christ here signifies ; and consequently ought not to be an impediment to divert us from so great a matter, as the kingdom of heaven, and serving of God. Secondly, how they are not only vanities and trifles, but also deceptions, as the words of Christ are ; that is to say, deceits and fallacies, not furnishing us really with those little satisfactions which they promise, and we so highly esteem.

Six principal points of this chapter.

Thirdly, how they are thorns, as our Saviour affirms; although they seem to worldly men to be most sweet and pleasant for a time, and to be flowers rather than thorns. Fourthly, how they are miseries and afflictions, according to our Saviour's meaning and speech. Fifthly, how they do strangle or choke their possessors, in the sense which our Saviour the Son of God says, in this parable. Sixthly, how we may use them notwithstanding, without these dangers and evils, to our great comfort, gain and preferment, if we will, and do take the right way therein.

SECT. I.—*How all the world is vanity.*

AND now for the first: although I might stand upon many reasons and demonstrations; yet I do not see how it can be better declared, briefly and pithily, that all pleasures and goodly shows of this world are mere vanities, as Christ here signifies; than by alleging the testimony and proof of some, who have tasted and proved them all; that is to say, of such a one, as speaks not only by speculation, but also by his own experience and practice. And this is the wise and mighty king Solomon, of whom the scripture reports wonderful matters, 2 Par. ix. touching his peace, prosperity, riches, and glory in this world. As for example, That all the kings of the earth desired to see his face, for his wisdom and renowned felicity; that all the princes living, besides, were not like him in wealth: that he had six hundred sixty and six talents of gold, which is an infinite sum, brought him yearly, besides all others that he had from the kings of Arabia, and other princes: that silver was as plentiful with him as heaps of stones, and not esteemed, for the great store and abundance he had thereof: that his plate and jewels had no end; that his seat of majesty, with stools, lions to bear it up, and other furniture, were of gold, surpassing all other kingly seats in the world; that his precious apparel and armour was infinite; that he had all the kings from the river of the Philistines, to Ægypt, as his servants: that he had forty thousand horses in his stables to ride, and twelve thousand chariots with horses and other furniture ready for them for his use. That he had two hundred spears of gold borne before him, and six hundred

*The
worldly
prosperity
of king
Solomon.*

crowns of gold bestowed upon every spear; as also three hundred bucklers, and three hundred crowns of gold bestowed in the gilding of every buckler: that he spent every day in his house, a thousand* nine hundred and thirty-seven quarters of meal and flour, thirty oxen, with a hundred wethers, besides all other flesh, that he had seven hundred wives, as queens, and three hundred others, as concubines. All this, and much more does holy scripture report† of Solomon's worldly wealth, wisdom, riches, prosperity: which he having tasted, and used to his fill, yet pronounced at last this sentence of it all; *Eccls. i: Vanitas vanitatum, & omnia vanitas*: vanity of vanities, and all is vanity. By vanity of vanities, meaning, as St. Hierom interprets,‡ the greatness of this vanity, above all other vanities that can be devised.

Neither does Solomon only affirm this thing in word, but proves it also by examples of himself: *Solomon's saying of himself.* I have been king of Israel in Jerusalem, says he, *Eccles. i.* and I proposed in my mind, to seek and search out wisely concerning all things; I have seen all things that are done under the sun and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. I said in my heart, *Ib c. ii.* I will go and abound with delights, and enjoy good things; and I saw that this also was vanity. I made me great works, I built me houses, and planted vineyards, I made gardens, and set them with trees of allkinds, and I made me a pond of water, to water therewith the wood of young trees, I got me men-servants, and maid-servants, and had a great family: and herds of oxen, and great flocks of sheep, above all that were before me in Jerusalem. I heaped together for myself silver and gold, and the wealth of kings and provinces: I made me singing-men, and singing-women, and the delights of the sons of men, cups and vessels to serve to pour out wine, &c. And whatsoever my eyes desired, I refused them not: and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure, and delighting itself in the things which I prepared. *And when I turned myself to all the works which my hands had wrought, and to the labours wherein I had laboured in vain; I saw in all things vanity and vexation of mind.*

* 30 Cori similæ, and 00 cori farinæ. And every corus is 21 quariers and odd. † 3 Reg. iv. &c. ‡ In cap. 1 Eccles.

This is the testimony of Solomon, upon his own experience in these affairs : and if he had spoken it upon his wisdom only, being such as it was, we ought to believe him ; but much more, seeing he affirms it of his own experience. But if any man be not moved with this, let us bring another witness out of the new Testament, and such a one as was privy to the opinion of our Saviour Christ herein ; and this is the holy evangelist and apostle St. John, who makes an earnest exhortation to all wise men, 1 *John* ii. never to entangle themselves with the love of worldly affairs, using this reason for the same : *The world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof*: that is to say, it is vain, fleeting, uncertain, and not permanent. And showing the substance of this transitory vanity, he reduces all to three general heads, or branches ; saying, *All that is in this world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life*. By the first he comprehends all sensual pleasures used in the cherishing and pampering the flesh : by the second, all beauty and bravery of riches ; by the third, he signifies the vanity of ambition in worldly honour and estimation.

The testimony of St. John.

The general branches of worldly vanities.

These then are the three general and most principal vanities of this life, wherein worldly men do weary out their brains ; to wit, ambition covetousness, and carnal pleasure. Whereunto also other lesser vanities are directed, as to their superiors. And therefore it will not be amiss to consider these three in this place, together with their dependants ; seeing that every one of these three have divers branches depending on them ; especially that which I will handle here first, called by St. John, *pride of life*, or ambition whereunto belong these six members that follow.

Three principal vanities.

First, vain glory, which is a certain inordinate desire to be well thought of, well spoken of, praised and glorified by men. And this is as great a vanity, though it be common to many, as if a man should run up and down the streets after a feather flying in the air, tossed hither and thither with the blasts of many men's mouths. For as this man might weary out himself before he got the thing which he followed, and yet when he had it, he had got but a feather ; so a vainglorious man may labour a good

Vain glory.

while, before he obtain the praise which he desires. And when he has it, it is nothing worth being but the breath of a few men's mouths, that alters upon every light occasion, and now makes him great, now little, now good, now bad, now nothing at all. Christ himself may be an example of this, who was tossed to and fro in the speech of men. Some said he was a Samaritan, *Matt. xxxvii.* and had a devil; others said, *John viii.* he could not be a prophet, or of God, because he kept not the Sabbath-day, others asked, if he were not of God, how he could do so many miracles? so that there was a schism or division among them about this matter, as St. John affirms, *John ix.* Finally, upon *Palm Sunday* they received him into Jerusalem with triumph of Hosanna, casting their apparel under his feet; but the Thursday and Friday next ensuing, they cried *crucify him*; and preferred the life of Barrabas, a wicked murderer before his.

Now, dear Christian, if they dealt thus with the Saviour of the world, why dost thou so labour and beat thyself about this bubble of vain-glory? why dost thou cast thy labour into the wind? why dost thou put thy riches in the lips of mutable men, where every flatterer may rob thee of them? St. Paul was of another mind, when he said, *1 Cor. iv.* But as to me, it is a thing of the least account to be judged by you, or by human judgment: And he had reason: for what cares he that runs at the tilt, if the ignorant people that stand by, give sentence against him, so the judges give it for him. If the blind man in the way to Jericho, *Luke xviii.* had depended on the liking and approbation of the goers by, he had never received the benefit of his sight; for they dissuaded him from running and crying so vehemently after Christ. It is a miserable thing for a man to be a windmill, which grinds not, nor makes meal but according as the wind serves. If the gale is strong he whirls about briskly; but if the wind is slack, he presently relents; so if you praise the vain-glorious man, he will run; but if he feels not the gale blow, he is out of heart. He is like the Babylonians, *Dan. xi.* who with a little sweet music were made to adore anything whatsoever.

The scripture says most truly, *Prov. xxvii.* 'As silver
A fit similitude. 'is tried in the fining-pot, and gold in the furnace, so a man is tried by the mouth of him
 'that praiseth.' For as gold, if it be good, takes

no hurt thereby ; if it be evil, it goes all into fume : so does a vain man, by praise and commendation. How many have we seen puffed up with men's praises, and almost put beside themselves for joy ; and yet afterwards brought down with a contrary wind, and driven near despair by contempt ? How many do we see daily, as the prophet did in his days, *Psalm* ix. commended in their sins, and blessed in their wickedness ? how many palpable and intolerable flatteries do we hear, both used and accepted daily, and no man cries out with good king David, *Psalm* cxl. Away with this oil and ointment of sinners ; let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head ? is not all this vanity ? is it not madness, as the scripture calls it ? the glorious angels in heaven seek no honor to themselves, but all to God ; and thou, poor worm of the earth, desirest to be glorified ? the four and twenty elders in the Apocalypse, *Apoc.* iv. took off their crowns and cast them at the feet of the lamb ; and thou wouldst pluck forty from the lamb to thyself, if thou couldst. O fond creature ! how truly says the prophet, *Psalm* cxliv. *Man is made like vanity*, as light as the very vanities themselves, which he follows. And yet the wise man more expressly, *Eccles.* xxiii. *In vanitate sua appenditur* : the sinner is weighed in vanity ; that is, by the vanity which he follows, is seen how light and vain a sinful man is. And is there any man who will leave the service of God, and his own salvation, for fear of what the world will say or think of him ? what imports thee, dear brother, in the next life, what will they say of thee here ? Think then upon this, and esteem it as a vanity indeed.

Worldly honour and promotion. This second vanity that belongs to ambition is desire of worldly honour and promotion. And this is a great matter in the sight of a worldly man ; this is a jewel of rare price, and worthy to be bought with any labour, or peril whatsoever.

The love of this hindered the great men that were Christians in Jewry, *John* xi. from confessing Christ openly. The love of this hindered Pilate from setting JESUS free, *John* xix. as he was bound in conscience. The love of this hindered Agrippa and Festus from making themselves Christians, *Acts* xxvi. although they esteemed St. Paul's doctrine to be true. The love of this daily hinders numberless men from embracing the means of their salvation. But alas ! these men do not see the vanity hereof. St. Paul says. 1

Cor. ii. not without just cause. *Be not made children in sense.* Children are wont to esteem a painted table more than a rich jewel. And such is the painted dignity of this world, got with much labour, maintained with great care and solicitude, and lost with intolerable grief and sorrow. For the better conceiving whereof, ponder a little with thyself, gentle reader, any state of dignity that thou couldst desire, and think how many have had that or the like before thee. Remember how many have ascended, and how they have descended down again : and imagine with thyself, which was greater, either the joy in getting, or the sorrow of losing it. Where are now all those emperors, those kings, those princes and prelates, who once rejoiced at their own advancement ? where are they now, I say ? who talks or thinks of them ? are they not forgot, and cast into their graves long ago ? and do not men boldly walk on their heads now, whose faces could not be looked on without fear in their life ? what good then have their dignities done them.

It is a wonderful thing to consider the vanity of this worldly honour. It is like a man's own shadow, which the more a man runs after, the more it flies from him ; and when he flies from it, it follows him again ; and the only way to catch it, is to fall down to the ground upon it. So we see that those men who desire honour in this world, are now forgot ; and those who fled most from it, and cast themselves lowest of all men by humility, are now most of all honoured : honoured I say, most, even by the world itself, whose enemies they were whilst they lived. For who is honoured more now, who is more commended and remembered than St. Paul, and his like, *Phil. iii.* who so much despised worldly honour in this life that he made less account thereof than of common dung ? Most vain then is the pursuit of worldly honour, which neither contents the mind, nor eases the afflicted body, nor continues with the possessor, nor leaves behind it any benefit or content, and consequently ought not to prevail with any man, against this great resolution, of which here we treat.

The third vanity that belongs to ambition or pride of life, is nobility of flesh and blood ; a great pearl in the eye of the world, and indeed to be esteemed, when it is joined with virtue, and accompanied with the fear of God ; but otherwise

both in itself, and in the sight of Almighty God, a mere trifle and vanity. Which holy Job, although he was of noble parentage, well understood when he writ these words : *Job xvii. I have said to rottenness : thou art my father : to worms, my mother and my sister.* He that will behold the nobility of his ancestors, let him look into their graves, and see whether Job says truly or no. True nobility was never begun but by virtue ; and therefore as it is a testimony of valour and virtue in the predecessors, so ought it to be a spur to the same in the successors. And he who holds the name thereof by descent only, without the substance of virtue, is a mere alien, in respect of his ancestors ; from whom he degenerates, and has nothing of their's, but only the bare outward show. Of which sort of men, God says by a prophet, *Hosea ix. They became abominable, as those things were which they loved, &c. Their glory hath flown away like a bird from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.* That is to say, they vaunt and glory in their ancestors, progenitors, and noble birth, whereas having no virtue in them, correspondent to their birth, but following their sensual appetites, and setting their affections on wicked and abominable delights ; they are made in like manner abominable, and contemptible both to God and man. And in this sense it is a fond vanity to beg credit of dead men, whereas we deserve none ourselves ; to seek old titles of honour from our ancestors, we being utterly incapable thereof, by our own base manners and behaviour. Christ clearly confounded this vanity,* when being descended himself of the greatest nobility and race of kings that ever was in the world ; and besides, that being also the Son of God, a much higher title, yet he called himself ordinarily by the name of, *John x. 'The Son of man ;'* that is to say, the Son of a poor Virgin, for otherwise he was not Son of man ; and further than this also, he called himself a shepherd, which, in the name of the world, is a name of contempt. And when long before his Incarnation he was to make a king first in Israel, he did not seek out the most ancient blood, but took *Soul*, 1 Reg. ix. of the lowest tribe of *Jews*, to wit, *Benjamin*, and after him David, 1 Reg. xvi. the poorest shepherd of all his brethren. And when he came into the world he sought not the noblest men to make princes

* Matt. viii. xxiv. and xxvi.

of the earth, that is, to make Apostles; but took of the poorest and simplest, *Matt. iv.* thereby to confound, as one of them says, *1 Cor. i.* the foolish vanity of this world, in making so great account of the pre-eminence of a little flesh and blood in this life, where merit of virtue is not found. Though yet on the other side, where worldly nobility and gentry is furnished with spirit and virtue, it is no doubt, an excellent ornament, and may do singular much good in God's service, and is highly respected by him, as by many examples may be proved; but it is no wise a sufficient motive to hinder any man from resolving to serve God, because he is noble; for in this respect it is a mere trifle indeed.

The fourth vanity that belongs to ambition or pride of life, is worldly wisdom; whereof the apostle says, *1 Cor. iii.* *The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.* If it be folly, then it is great vanity, no doubt, to delight and boast so much in it, as men do, especially against the wisdom of God and his saints. It is a strange and wonderful thing to behold, how contrary the judgments of God are to the judgments of worldly men. Who would not think that the wise men of this world were the fittest to be chosen to do Christ service in his Church? yet St. Paul says, *1 Cor. i.* God has not chosen many wise men, according to the flesh. Who would not think but that a worldly wise man might also easily make a wise Christian? yet St. Paul says no; except first he become a fool: *1 Cor. iii.* *If any man among you seem to be wise, let him become a fool that he may be wise.* Vain then, and of no account, is the wisdom of this world, except it is subject to the wisdom of God. And whosoever, though never so important in his own sight, and according to the world, shall condemn in this worldly wisdom, and for worldly respects, them that betake themselves to God's service; his wisdom is folly in this behalf, and this prudence mere vanity: and so will he one day confess it to be, when he will come to cry out with those of his condition in the next life: we senseless and foolish worldly wise men did think the life of saints to be mere madness; but now we come to see that they were wise indeed, and we only fools. And this is to be understood when human worldly wisdom contradicts spiritual wisdom, and not otherwise.

The fifth vanity belonging to this pride of life is corporal beauty ; whereof the wise man says, *The vanity of beauty.* *Prov. xxxi. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: the woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised.* Which also King David meant, when he said, *Psal. cxxviii. Turn away my eyes that they may not behold vanity.* This is a singular great vanity, dangerous and deceitful. Beauty is compared by holy men to a snake, which is fair without, and full of deadly poison within. If a man did but consider what infinite ruin and destruction have come by oversight liking thereof, he would beware of it. And if he did remember what fouldross lies under a fair skin, he would be little in love therewith, says a holy father. God has imparted certain sparkles of beauty, to his creatures on earth, thereby to draw us to consideration and love of his own beauty, whereof the other is but a shadow ; even as a man, finding a little issue of water, may seek out the fountain thereby ; or happening upon a small vein of gold, may thereby come to the head mine itself. But we like babes, delight ourselves only with the fair cover of the book, and never consider what is writ in it. In all fair creatures that man beholds, he ought to read this lesson, says a father, that if God could make a piece of earth so fair and lovely by imparting to it some spark of his beauty ; how infinitely fair is he himself, and how worthy of love and admiration ! and how happy shall we be when we shall come to enjoy his beautiful presence, from which all creatures do now take their beauty.

If we would exercise ourselves in this manner of thinking, we might easily keep our hearts pure, chaste, and unspotted before God, in beholding the beauty of his creatures upon earth. But because we use not this passage from the creature to the Creator, but rest only in the external appearance of a deceitful face, giving scope to our foul thoughts, and wilfully setting on fire our own concupiscence ; hence it is that many people do perish daily, by occasion of this fond vanity of an alluring visage.

I call it fond, because every child may discern the deceit and vanity thereof. For, take the fairest face in the world, wherewith many foolish men fell in love upon the sight thereof, and raze it over but with a little scratch, and all the comeliness is

How quickly beauty is destroyed.

gone : let but an ague come for four or five days, and all its goodly beauty is destroyed : let the soul depart but one half hour from the body, and this loving face is ugly to look on : let it lie but two days in the grave, or dead above ground, and those who were so earnestly in love with it before, will scarce abide to behold, or come near it. And if none of these things happen to it, yet old age quickly comes on, which shrivels the skin, draws in the eyes, rots the teeth, and so disfigures the whole visage, that it becomes more contemptible and horrible now than ever it was beautiful and alluring before. And what then can be greater vanity than this ? what a greater madness than either to take pride in it, if we are endowed with it ourselves, or to endanger our souls for it, if we behold it in others ? how miserable are those people, who bestow so much labour in procuring or preserving this corporal beauty, as if all their happiness consisted therein ; yea, many make it the chief obstacle of their resolution to serve God, and the principal occasion of their downfall and damnation.

The sixth vanity belonging to pride of life, is the glory of fine apparel, against which the Scripture says, *Eccles. xi. in apparel glory not at any time.* Of all vanities, that is the greatest, which yet you see so common among men and women of this world that nothing more ; but consider the vanity. If Adam had never fallen, we had never used apparel ; for that apparel was devised to cover the shame of our nakedness, and other infirmities contracted by that fall. Wherefore, we that take pride and glory in apparel, do as much as if a beggar should glory and take pride in the old clouts that cover his sores : Saint Paul said to a bishop, *8 Tim. vi.* That if we have wherewithal to cover ourselves we ought to be content. And Christ touched deeply the danger of nice apparel when he commended so much St. John Baptist, *Matt. iii. & xi.* for his coarse and austere attire, adding *Luke vii. Qui mollibus vestiuntur in domibus Regum sunt :* They who are not like John, but go clothed in soft and delicate apparel, are in the kings courts, *i. e.* in kings courts of this world, but not in the court of the king of Heaven. For which cause, in the description of the rich man damned, this is not omitted by our Saviour, *Luke xvi. That he was apparelled in purple and silk :* as though this also had been concurring towards his damnation. On the contrary, the

Scripture setting down the singular sanctity of Elias the prophet, 4 *Reg.* i. names also his poor apparel. It is a wonderful thing to consider the different proceeding of God, and of the world in this affair; God himself was the first that ever made apparel in this world, *Gen.* iii. and he made it for the most noble of all our ancestors in paradise; and yet he made it but of beasts skins. And St. Paul testifies of the noblest saints of the old testament, *Heb.* xii. that they were covered only with goat skins, and with the hairs of camels. What vanity is it then for us to be so curious in apparel, and to take such pride therein as we do? we rob and spoil all sorts of creatures upon earth, to cover our backs and adorn our bodies.

From one we take his wool, from another his skin, from another his hair and fur; and from some other their very excrements. as the silk, which is nothing else but the excrements of worms. Not yet content with this, we come to fish, and beg of them pearls to hang about us. We go down into the ground for gold and silver; and turn up the sands of the sea for precious stones: and having borrowed all this of other creatures far more base than ourselves, we go up and down, to draw the eyes of men upon us, as if all this now were our own. When the stone shines upon our finger, we think to shine thereby. When silver, gold, and silks glitter on our backs, we look as great as if all that beauty came from us. When cat's dung smells in our garments, we would have men think. that we send forth sweet odors from ourselves. And thus, as the prophet says, *Psal.* lxxvii. We pass over our days in vanity, and do not perceive our own extreme folly. And yet this folly is so powerful, with many, that not to leave off this vanity of gay apparel, is a sufficient motive to hinder them from the resolution we propose of God's service, and their own everlasting good.

And thus much may suffice, concerning the general head of worldly vanities, termed by St. John, pride of life. There follows the second, which he calls *Concupiscence of the eyes*; whereunto the ancient fathers have referred all vanities of riches, and wealth of this world. Of this St. Paul writes to Timothy: 1 *Tim.* vi. 'Command the rich of this world, not to be high minded, nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches.' The reason of which

The extreme vanity and poverty of man.

The second head of worldly vanities. Concupiscence of the eyes.

speech is given by the scripture in another place, when it says, *Prov. xi.* ‘Riches shall not profit in the day of revenge ; that is at the day of death and judgment. Which thing the rich men of this world do confess themselves, though too late, now being in torments : *Sap. v.* ‘What advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us ?’ all which evidently declares the great vanity of worldly riches which can do the possessor no good at all, when he has most need of their help. *They have slept their sleep*, says the prophet, *Psal. lxxv.* ‘and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands :’ that is, rich men have passed over this life, as men pass over a dream, imagining themselves to have golden mountains and treasures wherewith to help themselves in all needs that will occur ; and when they awake, at the day of their death, they find themselves to have nothing in their hands that can do them good. In respect whereof, the prophet Baruch asks this question : *Bar. iii.* Where are they now, who hoarded up silver and gold, and there is no end of their getting ? and he answers himself immediately. *Exterminati sunt, & ad inferos descenderunt : They are cut off, and are gone down to hell.* To the like effect says St. James : *James v.* ‘Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come to you ; your riches are putrified, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is rusted : and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days.’

A comparison.

All this and much more, is spoken by the Holy Ghost, to signify the dangerous vanity of worldly wealth, and the folly of those men who labour so much to procure the same unjustly, or, having it, use the same in order to vanity, and not to the profit of their own souls. And surely, if so many skilful physicians, as I have here alleged in holy scriptures, should agree together, that such or such meats were unwholesome and perilous. I think few men would venture to eat thereof, though otherwise in sight, smell, and taste they appeared sweet and pleasant. How then comes it to pass, that so many earnest admonitions of God himself, stop us not from the inordinate love of this dangerous vanity ? ‘*If riches abound,*’ said God, by the prophet, *Psal. lxi.* ‘set not your hearts upon them. The wise man says : *Eccles. xxxi.* ‘He that loveth

gold, shall not be justified. 'I am angry with a great anger with the wealthy nations,' says God by Zachary, *Zach. i.* Christ says, *Matt. xix.* Amen, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again, *Luke vi.* 'Wo to you that are rich, because you have your consolation.' Finally St. Paul says generally of all and to all. *1 Tim. vi.* 'They who would become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown man in destruction and perdition. Can anything be spoke more effectually, to dissuade from the love of riches? must not now all covetous men of the world condemn themselves in their own consciences? let them excuse themselves as much as they will, by the pretence of wife and children, and kinsfolks, as they are wont, saying, they mean nothing else but to provide for their sufficiency. But does Christ our Saviour admit of this excuse? he asked the rich man that had filled his barns, who should have those riches? for that very night they were to take his soul from him; and he might have answered, his wife, children, and kindred; but he durst not, because the interrogation began with *Thou fool*: and indeed it is a great folly, if we consider it well: for tell me, dear Christian, what comfort can it be to an afflicted father in hell, to remember that by his means his wife and children live in plenty on earth, and that, by his eternal woe, they enjoy some few years pleasures! nò, no, this vanity is a mere deceit of our spiritual enemy. For within a moment after we are dead, we shall care no more for wife, children, father, mother, or brother in this matter, than we shall for a mere stranger; and a penny given in Alms for God's sake, whilst we lived, will comfort us more at that day, than thousands of pounds bestowed upon our kindred out of the natural love we bear our own flesh and blood. Which one point would to Christ all worldly men would consider, and then, no doubt, they would never take such care for kindred as they do, and be so sparing in doing good to themselves, especially upon their death-beds, whence presently they are to depart to that place, where flesh and blood holds no more privilege, nor riches have any power to deliver them; but only such as were well bestowed in the service of God, or given to the poor for his name's sake. In which res-

The pretence of wife and children refuted.

pect only a rich man is happy, if he knows but how to use his happiness whilst he has time, which few do. And this shall be sufficient for this point of riches.

The third branch of worldly vanities is called by St. John, *Concupiscence of the flesh*; which contains all pleasures and carnal recreations of this life; as are, banquetting, laughing, playing, and such other delights, wherewith our flesh is much delighted in this world. And although in this kind there is a certain measure to be allowed to the godly, for the convenient maintenance of their health, as also in riches, which is not to be reprehended; yet that all those worldly solaces are not only vain, but also dangerous in that excess and abundance, as worldly wealthy men seek and use them, appears plainly by these words of Christ: *Luke vi.* ‘Wo to you that are filled, for you shall hunger: Wo to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.’ And again in St. John’s Gospel, speaking to his Apostles, and by them to all others, he says, *John xvi.* ‘You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice:’ making it a distinctive sign between the good and the bad, that the one shall mourn in this life, and the other rejoice and make themselves merry.

The very same does Job confirm of both the one and the other sort; for he says of worldlings, *Job xxi.* ‘they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell.’ But of the godly, he says in his own person, *Job iii.* ‘Before I eat I sigh.’ And in another place, *Job ix.* ‘I feared all my works, knowing that thou didst not spare the offender.’ The reason whereof the wise man yet further expresses, saying, *Eccles. ix.* ‘Their works are in the hand of God: and yet man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred: but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come.’ And old Tobias insinuates yet another cause when he says, *Tob. v.* ‘What manner of joy shall be to me who sit in darkness?’ speaking literally of his corporal blindness; but yet leaving it also to be understood of spiritual and eternal darkness.

These are then the causes, besides external afflictions which God often sends, why the godly live more grave, sad, and fearful in this life, ac-

*Why good
men are*

cording the counsel of St. Paul,* than wicked *sad in this* men do; and why also they often sigh and weep, *life.* as Job and Christ do affirm;† to wit, because they often remember the severe justice of Almighty God; their own frailty in sinning; the secret judgment of his predestination uncertain to us, the vale of misery and desolation wherein they live here, which even made the very apostles themselves to lament, as St. Paul affirms,‡ although they had much less cause than we have. In respect whereof, we are desired to pass over this life in care, watchfulness, fear and trembling. In regard whereof also, the wise man says, *Eccles. vii.* ‘It is better to go to the house of mourning, ‘than to the house of feasting.’ And again, *Prov. xxviii.* ‘the heart of wise men where sadness is: and the heart of ‘fools where mirth is.’ Finally, in consideration of these things, the scripture says, ‘Blessed is the man who is al- ‘ways fearful.’ Which is nothing else, but that which the Holy Ghost commands every man by Micheas the prophet: *Mich. vi.* ‘to do judgment, and to love mercy, and to walk ‘solicitous with thy God:’ thinking upon his commandments; how we keep and observe the same; how we resist and mortify our bodies upon earth; how we bestow our time, talents, and riches lent us; how we labour in good works for the gaining of heaven, what account he could yield, if presently we were to die, &c. Which thoughts, if they might have place with us, would cut off a great many of those worldly pastimes, wherewith the careless sort of sinners are overwhelmed; I mean, of those good fellowships in eating, drinking, laughing, singing, disputing, and other such vanities that distract us most. Hereof Christ gave us a most notable advertisement, in this that he oftentimes wept: and for example the holy scripture mentions, at the resuscitation of Lazarus, *John xi.* and upon Jerusalem, *Luke xix.* But he is never said to have laughed in all his life. Each man’s nativity and death is also a signification and figure of this: which two extremities, I mean, our beginning and ending, being reserved by God in his own hands to dispose of, are appointed to us in sorrow, grief, and weeping, as we see and feel. But the middle part thereof which is our life, being left by Almighty God

* 1 Cor. ii. 2 Cor. vii. & Phil. ii.
viii. & Ephes. iv.

† Job ii, & John xvi.

‡ Rom.

in our hands, we pass it over with vain delights, never thinking whence we came, nor whither we go.

A similitude. A wise traveller passing by his inn, although he sees pleasant meats set before him to feast at his pleasure; yet he forbears and restrains his appetite upon consideration of the price, and of the journey he has to make; and takes only so much as he knows well how to discharge the next morning at his departure. But a fool lays hands on every delicate bit that is presented to his sight, and plays the prince for a night or two; but the next morning when it comes to the reckoning, he wishes he had lived only on bread and drink, rather than be so troubled as he is for the payment. The custom of God's church is to fast the eve of every feast, and then to rejoice the next day following, which is the festival itself. And this represents the abstinent life of good men in this world, thereby to rejoice in the world to come. But the custom of the world is quite contrary; that is, to eat and drink merrily first at the tavern, and after to let the host bring in his reckoning. They eat, drink, and laugh, and the host scores up all in the mean time; and when the time comes that they must pay, many a heart is sad, that was pleasant before.

This very self-same thing holy scripture affirms also of the pleasures of this world: *Prov. xiv.* 'Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and mourning taketh hold of the end of joy.' The devil that plays the host in this world, and will serve you at an inch with what delight or pleasure you desire, writes down all in his book; and at the day of your departure, which is, at your death, he will bring in the whole reckoning, and charge you with it all, and then will follow that which God promises to worldlings, by the prophet Amos: *Amos viii.* 'I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentations.' Yea, and more than this, if you be not able to discharge your reckoning, you may chance to hear that other dreadful sentence of Christ in the Apocalypse: *Apoc. xviii.* 'As much as she hath glorified herself and hath been in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give unto her.'

The conclusion of the first point. Wherefore to conclude this point, and therewithal this first part of the parable, touching vanities; we may truly say with the prophet David, of a worldly minded man: *Psal. xxxviii.* 'And

indeed all things are vanity, every man 'living.' That is to say, both vanity in ambition, vanity in riches, vanity in pleasures, vanity in all things which they now esteem. And therefore I may well end with the words of Almighty God, by the prophet Isaiah: *Isaiah* v. 'Wo to you that draw iniquity with cords of vanity.' These ropes are those vanities of promotion, dignity, nobility, beauty, riches, delights, and other such like before-mentioned, which always draw with them some iniquity and sin. For which cause holy David says to his Lord, *Psalms* xxxi. 'Thou hast hated them that observe vanities unprofitably.' And lastly, for this cause the Holy Ghost pronounces, generally of all men, *Psalms* xxxix. 'Blessed is the man whose trust is in the name of the Lord, and hath not had regard to vanities and lying follies.'

*The ropes
of vanity.*

SECT. II. *How worldly vanities are also deceits.*

Now we come to the second part proposed in this chapter which was also the second point contained in Christ's parable, *Matt.* xii. to show how this world, and the pleasing commodities thereof, are not only vanities for the most part, but also deceits: for indeed they perform not those small trifles which they promise their followers. Wherein the world may be compared to that wretched and ungrateful deceiver Laban, *Gen.* xix. who made poor Jacob serve him seven years for fair Rachel, and in the end deceived him with foul Leah.

*False promises
of
the world.*

What false promises does the worldly daily make us? to one it promises long life and health, and cuts him off in the midst of his days. To another it promises great wealth and promotion, and after long service it performs no part thereof. To another it promises great honour by large expences, but under-hand it casts him into contempt and beggary. To another it promises great advancement by marriage, but never gives him ability to come to his desire. Go over the whole world, behold countries, view provinces, look into cities, hearken at the doors and windows of private houses, of princes palaces, of secret chambers, and you will see and hear nothing else but lamentable complaints. one, because he has lost; another, because he has not won; a third, because he is not satisfied; ten thousand, because they are deceived.

Can there be a greater deceit, for example, than *The false promises of renown.* to promise renown and memory, as the world does to its followers, and yet to forget them as soon as they are dead? who now remembers one of forty thousand, that thought themselves great people whilst they were in this world, captains, soldiers, counsellors, dukes, earls, princes, prelates, emperors, kings, queens, lords, and ladies? who, I say, remembers them now? who once thinks or speaks of them? has not their memory perished with their sound as the prophet foretold? *Psal. ix.* Did not Job promise truly, *Job xiii.* That 'their remembrance shall be compared to ashes trodden under foot? and David, *Psal. 1.* 'That they shall 'be like dust, which the wind driveth from the face of 'the earth?' One of the first holy hermits named Paul, hid himself as St. Jerom reports in his life, four score and ten years in a wilderness, without knowing or speaking with any man, or once showing or revealing himself to the world. And yet now the world both remembers and honours his memory. But many a king and emperor have laboured all their life to be known in the world, and yet are now forgotten. So that the world, in this point, is like a covetous and forgetful host; who if he sees his old guest come by his inn in a beggarly state, all his money being spent, he seems not to know him: and if the guest marvels thereat, and says, that he has often come that way, and spent much money in the house; the other answers, it may be so my friend, for many pass this way, and we use not to keep account of all. But what is the way to make this host remember you? it is to use him ill as you pass by, as St. Paul, and his like, did with the world, and he will remember you as long as he lives, and many times will talk of you when you are far off from him.

Infinite are the deceits and dissimulations of the world: it seems godly, fair and pompous in outward show; but when it comes to handling, it is nothing but a feather; when it comes to sight, it is nothing but a shadow; when it comes to weight, it is nothing but smoke; when it comes to opening, it is nothing but an image of plasterwork, of old rags and patches within. 'O miserable and most deceitful world,' says St. Augustine,* whose grief is true, and delights

* Aug. 13 Medit.

‘ false ; whose sorrows are certain, and pleasures uncertain : whose pains are permanent, and repose transitory ; whose toils are intolerable, and rewards most contemptible : whose promises are princely, and payments beggarly ; whose miseries are void of all consolation, and whose happiness is mingled with all kind of misery.’

To know the miseries of the world, you must go a little from it says one. For as they who walk in a mist, do not see it so well, as those who stand upon a hill out of it : so fares it in discerning the world ; whose property is, to blind them that come to it, to the end they may not see their own state : even as a raven first of all strikes out the poor sheep’s eyes, to the end she may not see the way to escape from its tyranny.

A similitude.

So then after the world has once bereft the worldling of his spiritual sight, so that he can judge no longer between good and evil, vanity and verity, then also, it rocks him asleep, at his ease and pleasure. It binds him sweetly, it deceives him pleasantly, it torments him in great peace and rest ; it has a proud spirit presently ready, which places him on the pinnacle of greedy ambition, and thence shows him all the dignities and preferments of the world ; it has twenty false merchants, who in the dark show him the first end of fair and precious cloths ; but he must never look into the whole pieces, nor carry them to the light, thereby to discern them. It has four hundred false prophets to flatter him, as Achan had, 3 Reg. xxii. who must keep him from the hearing of Micheas’s counsel ; that is, from the remorse of his own conscience, which tells him the truth. It has a thousand cunning fishers to lay before him pleasant baits, but all furnished with most sharp and dangerous hooks within. It has innumerable strumpets of Babylon, to offer drink in golden cups, but all mingled with most deadly poison. It has in every door an alluring Jael to entice him to the milk of pleasures and delights ; but all have their hammer and nails in their hand to murder him, when he falls asleep. It has in every corner a flattering Joah to embrace with one arm, and kill with the other. A false Judas to give a kiss and therewith to betray him, and deliver him to torments.

The practice of the World.

Finally, it has all the deceits, all the dissimulations, all the flatteries, all the treasons, that possibly can be devised. It hates them that love

The true figure of the world.

it; deceives them that trust in it; it afflicts them that serve it; it reproaches them that honour it: it damns them that follow it; and most of all forgets them that labour most of all for it. And to be brief in this matter, do what you can for this world, and love it, and adore it as much as you will, yet in the end you will find it a right Nahal, who after many benefits received from David, yet when David came to have need of him, he answered, 1 Reg. xxv. 'Who is David, and what is the son of Isai,' that I should know him? With great cause then the prophet David said, *Psalms* iv. 'Ye sons of men, how long are you of heavy heart, why love you vanity, and seek lying?' he calls the world not a liar, but a lie itself, for the exceeding great fraud and deceit which it uses in all its pretences.

SECT. III. *How Riches are Thorns.*

HAVING now declared how the commodities of this world, that hinder men from resolution, are both vanities and fallacies, next is to be examined, in what sense our Saviour also call them thorns. Of which St. Gregory writes thus: * 'Who would ever have believed me, says he, if I had called riches thorns, as Christ here does, seeing thorns prick and riches are so pleasant? and yet truly are they called thorns, for with the pricks of their careful cogitations, they tear and make the minds of worldly men bloody.' By which words this holy father signifies, that even as a man's naked body tossed and tumbled among many thorns, cannot be much rent and torn, and made bloody with the pricks thereof, so a worldly man's soul, beaten with the cares and thoughts of gaining worldly wealth, cannot but be vexed with restless pricking of the same, and wounded also with many temptations of sin which occur. This Solomon in the places before alleged, † signifies, when he does not only call the riches and pleasures of this world, vanity of vanities, that is the greatest vanity of all other vanities; but also affliction of spirit, giving us thereby to understand, that where these vanities are, and the love of them once enters, there is no more the peace of God which surpasses all understanding; there is

* Hom. 5. in Evang. † Eccles. 1, 2, 3, 4.

no longer rest or quiet of mind; but war of desires, vexation of thoughts, tribulation of fear, pricking of cares, and unquietness of soul, which is indeed a most miserable affliction of spirit.

And the reason hereof is, because as a clock can never stand still, as long as the poises hang thereat, so a worldly man having numberless cares, thoughts, and anxieties, hanging on his mind, as poises upon the clock, can never have rest or repose day or night, but is forced to beat his brains when other men sleep, for the compassing those trifles wherewith he is incumbered. O how many rich men in the world feel this to be true! how many ambitious men prove it daily, and yet will not deliver themselves out of these miserable troubles! Of all the plagues sent to Ægypt, that of the flies was one of the most troublesome, and fastidious; for they never suffered men to rest, but the more they were beaten off, the more they came upon them. So of all the miseries and vexations that God lays upon worldly men, this is not the least, to be tormented with the cares of that thing which they think the greatest felicity, and not be able to beat them off by any means. They rush upon them in the morning as soon as they awake; they accompany them in the day; they forsake them not at night; they follow them to bed, they hinder them from their sleep; they afflict them in their dreams; and finally they are those importune and unmerciful tyrants which God threatens to wicked men, by Jeremiah the prophet: *Jer. xvi.* ‘You shall serve strange Gods day and night, which shall not give you any rest.’ And the cause thereof which God alleges in the same chapter is, *Because I have taken away my peace from this people*, saith the Lord, *my mercy and commiserations.* A very heavy sentence to all those that lie under the yoke and bondage of those miserable afflicted vanities.

A comparison.

The torments of rich men in their riches.

But yet the prophet Isaiah has a much more terrible description of the state of these men; *Isa. lix.* ‘They trust in a mere nothing, and speak vanities, says he: they have conceived labour and brought forth iniquity: they have broken the eggs of asps, and have woven the webs of spiders: he that shall eat of their eggs, shall die; and that which is brought out, shall be hatched into a basilisk. Their

webs shall not make cloth to cover them, for their works are unprofitable; and the works of iniquity is in their hands. These are the words of the prophet, declared to us by most significant similitudes, what dangerous thorns the riches

*The explication
of the
words of
Isaiah.*

and pleasures of this world are. And first he says, They put their hope in things of nothing, and talk vanities; to signify that he means the vanities and vain men of this world, who commonly do talk of the things which they love best, and wherein they place their greatest confidence.

Secondly, he says, They have conceived labour, and brought forth iniquity: alluding here to the child-birth of women, who first conceive in their wombs, and then, after a great deal of labour, bring forth their infants: even so worldly men, after a great time of fatigue and labour in vanities, do bring forth no other fruit but sin and iniquity. For that is the effect of those vanities, as he says in another chapter, crying out to such kind of men, Wo to you, that draw iniquity in cords of vanity.

*Two significant
similitudes.*

But yet to express this matter more forcibly, he uses two other similitudes, saying, They have broken the eggs of asps, and have woven the webs of spiders: signifying by the one, the vanity of these worldly cares, and by the other the

danger thereof. The spider we see takes great pains, and labours many days together, to weave herself a web; and in the end, and when all is done, comes a puff of wind, or some other little chance, and breaks all in pieces. Even as he in the Gospel, who had taken great pains and care in heaping riches together, in plucking down his old barns and building up new; when he was come to say to his soul, now be merry, that night his soul was taken from him, and all his labour lost. Therefore Isaiah says in this place, That the webs of these weavers shall not make them clothes to cover themselves withal, because their works are unprofitable.

The other comparison contains matter of great danger and fear. For as the bird that sits upon the eggs of serpents, by breaking and hatching them, brings forth a perilous brood to her own destruction, so those that sit, as it were, and brood upon the vanities of the world, and do affect them over much, hatch also at last their own destruction. The reason whereof is, as Isaiah says, Because the

work of iniquity is in their hands ; still meaning, that a man cannot love and follow these vanities, or entangle himself with their ropes, as his former phrase is, but that commonly he draws on much iniquity therewith. Which because it kills the soul that consents to it, therefore Isaiah compares it to the brood of serpents that kill the bird which brings them forth into the world. And finally, Moses uses the like similitudes, when he says of vain and wicked men, *Deut. xii.* ‘Of the vineyard of Sodom is their vineyard, and of the suburbs of Gomorrah : Their grape the grape of gall, and the clusters most bitter. The gall of dragons their wine, and the venom of asps incurable. By which dreadful and loathsome comparisons he would give us to understand, that the sweet pleasures of this world are indeed deceitful thorns, and will prove in the end most bitter and dangerous, if a man gives himself over to them, or uses them not with great moderation and sobriety.

SECT. IV. *The World is Misery.*

THE fourth point that we have to consider is, how this word misery, that is, calamity and affliction of mind, may be verified of the world, and of the felicity thereof. Which thing, although it may appear sufficiently by that which has been said before, yet I will, as I promised, discuss it a little further in this place, by some particulars. And among many afflictions which I might here recount, the first, and one of the greatest is, the brevity and uncertainty of all worldly prosperities, when a man has got them. *Brevity and instability.* Ohow great a misery is this to a worldly man, that would have his pleasures constant and perpetual ! ‘O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee,’ says the scripture, *Eccles. xli.* ‘to a man that hath peace in his possession !’ we have seen many men advanced in haste, and in haste fallen again, and not flourish two months in their prosperity : We have heard of divers married in great joy, and not to have lived six days in their felicity. We have read of strange matters that have happened in these kinds, and we see daily no few examples with our own eyes. What a grief was it, think you to *Alexander the Great*, that having subdued, in twelve years, the greatest part of the world, he should then be forced to

die, when he was most desirous to live, and when he was to take the most joy and comfort in his victories? What a sorrow was it to the rich man in the gospel, to hear upon a sudden, even this night, thou must die? What a misery will this be to many worldlings when it comes, who now build palaces, purchase lands, heap riches, procure dignities, make marriages, join kindreds, as though there were never any end of all these matters? What a doleful day will this be to them, I say, when they must be turned off, no otherwise than princes' mules are wont to be at the end of a journey; that is, their treasure taken from them, and their galled backs only left to themselves? For as we see

A comparison.

these mules of princes go all the day long, loaden with treasures, and covered with fine trappings, but at night shaken off into some sorry stable, much bruised and galled with the carriage of those treasures; so many rich men who pass through this world, loaden with gold and silver, and gall their souls in carrying that load, are deprived of their rich burden at the day of death, and turned off with their wounded consciences, to the loathsome stable of hell and damnation.

Discontents.

Another misery joined to the prosperity of this world, is the grievous counterpois of discontents that every worldly pleasure has within it. Run over every delight and solace in this life, and see what sauce it has adjoined. Ask them that have had most proof thereof, whether they remained contented or no: the possession of riches is accompanied with so many fears and cares, as has been shown. The advancement to honours is subject to all the miserable servitude that can be devised. The pleasure of the flesh, even when it is lawful and honest, is accompanied, as St. Paul says, 1 Cor. iii. 'with tribulation of the flesh:' but if it be with sin, it is ten thousand times more environed with all kind of miseries.

Miseries of body.

Who can reckon up the calamities of our body? so many diseases, so many infirmities, so many mischances, so many dangers? Who can tell

Of mind.

the passions of our mind that afflict us, now with sorrow, now with envy, now with inordinate love, now with desire, now with anger? Who can recount the

Of goods.

adversities and misfortunes that befall us in regard to our goods? Who can number the hurts, and

discontents, that daily come upon us from our neighbours? one sues us at law for our goods; another pursues us for our life; a third, by slander impugns our good name. One afflicts us by hatred, another by envy, another by flattery, another by deceit, another by revenge, another by false witnesses, another by open arms. There are not so many days, nor hours in our lives, as there are miseries and contrarieties in the same. And further than this, the evil have this prerogative above the good in our life; that one defect alone overwhelms and drowns a great number of pleasures together. As if a man had all the felicities heaped together which this world could yield, and yet had but a pain in one tooth, all the other pleasures would not make him merry. And the like in other cases, whereof take an example in Aman, chief counsellor of Assuerus, who, because Mardocheus the Jew did not rise up to him, when he went by, nor honour him, as other men did, he said to his wife and friends, that all his other felicities were nothing, in respect of this one affliction.

Besides all these miseries, there is yet another greater in some respect than the former; and that is, the infinite number of temptations, of snares, of enticements in the world, whereby men are daily drawn to perdition. So that no man is in security one day or hour, which is truly a great misery to him that considers well the danger: as it would be to him that in the night should walk upon a high slippery rock, where every step might be his last ruin. St. Athanasius writes of St. Anthony the hermit,* that God revealed to him one day the state of the world; and he saw it all hung full of nets, in every corner, and devils sitting by, to watch the same. The prophet David, to signify the very same thing, that is, the infinite multitude of snares set to worldly men in this life, says, *Psalms* x. 'God shall rain snares,' &c. That is, God shall permit snares to be as plentiful for the perdition of evil men, as are the drops of rain which fall down from the skies: For every thing almost is a deadly snare to a carnal and loose hearted man. Every enticing sight he sees, every lascivious word he hears, every pleasing thought he conceives; his youth, his age, his friends, ene-

Temptations and dangers.

* Athan. in vita St. Antonii.

mies, honour, disgrace, riches, poverty, conversation, prosperity, the meat he eats, the apparel he wears; all are snares to draw him to destruction that is not watchful, but yields himself over to sensuality.

From this then, and from the spiritual blindness, whereby worldly men's minds are incumbered, follows the last and greatest misery of all that can be in this life; and that is the facility wherewith they run into sin. For truly says the scripture, *Prov. xiv.* 'Sin maketh nations miserable.' And yet how easily men of the world commit sin, and how little scruple they make of the matter, the scripture signifies, where, talking of such men, it says, *Prov. iv.* 'They eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of iniquity.' That is, they venture with great facility, custom, and ease, upon any kind of sin that is offered to them, as a man drinks when he is thirsty. He that will not believe the saying of the wise man, let him try a little by his own experience, whether the matter be so or no. Let him walk out into the streets, behold the proceedings of men, view their behaviour, consider what is said and treated, in shops, in halls, in consistories, in judgment-seats, in palaces, and in common meeting-places abroad; what lying, what slander-ing, what deceiving there is. He will find, that of all things, whereof men do make any account in the world, nothing is so little regarded, as to commit sin. He will see justice sold, verity betrayed, shame lost, and equity disguised. He will see the innocent condemned, the guilty delivered, the wicked advanced, the virtuous oppressed. He will see many thieves flourish, many usurers bear great sway, many murderers and extortioners revered and honoured, many fools put in authority; and divers who have nothing in them, but the bare shape and form of men, by reason of money, placed in great dignities to govern others. He will hear from almost every man's mouth, vanity, pride, detraction, envy, deceit, dissimulation, wantonness, dissolution, lying, swearing, perjury, and blasphemy. Finally, he will see the greatest part of men govern themselves absolutely even as beasts do, by the motion of their passions, not by the law of justice, reason, religion or virtue: and thereby he may frame his conceit of the world in this behalf.

*Facility
of sin-
ning.*

*The sin-
ful state
of the
world.*

SECT. V. *How the world strangles.*

FROM this then follows the fifth point that Christ touches in his aforesaid parable, which I promised to speak of here; to wit, that the love of this world, when it is immoderate, choaks up and strangles those whom it possesses depriving them of all spiritual air of heavenly life, filling and replenishing them with a gross earthly spirit, quite contrary to the spirit of God. The apostles says, *Rom. viii.* 'Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' Now how contrary the spirit of Christ is to the spirit of the world may appear by the fruits of Christ's spirit reckoned up by St. Paul to the Galatians; *Gal. v.* to wit, charity, which is the root and mother of all good works; joy in serving God: peace, or tranquillity of mind, in the storms of this world: patience in adversity: longanimity, in expecting our reward: bounty, or goodness in hurting no man: benignity in sweet behaviour: meekness, when occasion of anger is given: fidelity in performing our promises: modesty, without arrogancy: continency from all kind of wickedness: charity, in conserving a pure mind in a clean and unspotted body. Against such, says St. Paul, *Gal. v.* *there is no law.* And in the very same chapter, he expresses the spirit of the world by the contrary effects and fruits, saying, *The works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I foretel you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God.*

The effects of the spirit of Christ.

The effect of the spirit of this world.

Here every man may judge of the spirit of the world, and of the spirit of Christ; and, reflecting on himself, conjecture whether he is of the one, or of the other. St. Paul gives two short rules in the very same place, for some proof and trial. The first is, *Gal. v.* 'And they who are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.' Which is as much as to say, they have so mortified their own bodies, that they commit none of the vices and sins

Two rules of St. Paul to know our spirit.

repeated before; nor do yield to the concupiscences or temptations thereof. The second rule or direction is, That if we live in spirit, we must walk in spirit. That is, that our walking and behaviour must be a sign, whether we live or be dead in spirit. For if our walking be spiritual (such as I declared before by the true fruits thereof) then do we live and have life in spirit. But if our works be carnal (such as St. Paul now has described) then we are carnal, and dead in spirit; nor have we any part in Christ, or portion in his kingdom, not holding his spirit. And because

Christ and the world enemies. all the world is full of those carnal works and brings forth no fruits of Christ's spirit, nor permits them to grow or prosper in such as follow the

world, its vanities: thence it is, that the scripture always puts Christ and the world for opposite enemies, not compatible the one with the other, which is a point of no small consideration. Christ's words are plain: *John* xiv. That the world cannot receive the spirit of truth: Therefore they are opposite. And again, in the same evangelist, he says of himself and his, *Ibid.* xv. That neither he, nor any of his servants, are of the world, though they live in the world.

And yet further, in his most devout and heavenly prayer to his father, *John* xvii. 'Just father, the world hath not known thee.' For which cause St. John writes, 1 *John* ii. *If any man love the world, the charity of the father is not in him.* And yet further, St. James, *James* iv. *Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God.* What will worldly men say to this? But yet hear further St. Paul, saying plainly and without exception, 1 *Cor.* xi. That this world is to be damned, that is, they who live according to the spirit of the world. And Christ insinuates no less in St. John's gospel, *John* xii. but most of all, in that dreadful exception of his, when praying to his father for those that were to be saved, he excepts the world by name, *John* xvii. *Not for the world do I pray,* says he, I do not ask mercy and pardon for the world, but those whom thou hast given me out of the world. O worldly men! what a dreadful exception is this, made by the Saviour of the world himself; by the lamb that takes away all sins; by him that asked pardon, even for his tormentors and crucifiers! what a point of terror, I say, is this, that now he excepts the world by name from his mer-

cy! Oh that worldly men would but consider this one point only, they would not, I think, live so void of fear as they do, and be so enamoured with worldly designs

Can any man marvel now, why St. Paul cries so carefully to us, *Rom. xii. Be not conformed to this world?* and again, *Tit. ii. That we should utterly renounce all secular desires?* can any man marvel why St. John who was most privy, above others, to Christ's holy meaning herein, says to us in such earnest sort, *1 John ii. Love not the world, nor those things which are in the world?* if we may neither love it, nor so much as conform ourselves to it, under so great pains as of the enmity of God, and of our eternal damnation, which are before rehearsed, what will become of those men that do not only conform to it, and to the vanities thereof, but also follow it, love it, and bestow all their labours and pains upon it.

If you ask me the cause why Christ so hates and abhors this world, St. John tells you, because, *1 John v. The whole world is seated in wickedness;* which is a spirit quite contrary to the spirit of Christ, as has been showed. Which spirit leads to pride, vain-glory, ambition, envy, revenge, malice, with pleasures of the flesh, and all kind of vanities. As Christ, on the contrary persuades to humility, meekness, pardoning of enemies, abstinence, chastity, sufferance, mortification, bearing the cross, with contempt of all earthly pleasures for the kingdom of heaven. Christ hates the world, because it persecutes the good, and advances the bad; because it roots out virtue and plants vice; and finally, because it shuts the doors against Christ when he knocks, and strangles the heart that once it possesses as before has been showed.

*Why
Christ
hates the
world.*

Wherefore to conclude this part, seeing this world is such a thing as it is; so vain, so deceitful, so troublesome, so dangerous; seeing it is a professed enemy of Christ, excommunicated and damned to the pit of hell: seeing it is, as a father says, an ark of labour, a school of vanities, a market of deceit, a labyrinth of error; seeing it is nothing else but a barren wilderness, a stony field, a dirty sty, a tempestuous sea; seeing it is a grove full of thorns, a meadow full of scorpions, a flourishing garden without fruit; a cave full of poisoned and deadly basilisks; seeing it is as I have shown,

*A description
of the
world.*

a fountain of miseries, a river of tears, a feigned fable, a delectable frenzy: seeing, as St. Augustine says,* the joy of this world has nothing else but false delight, true asperity, certain sorrow, uncertain pleasure, troublesome labour, fearful rest, grievous misery, vain hope of felicity; seeing it has nothing in it, as St. Chrysostom says,† but tears, shame, repentance, reproach, madness, negligences, labours, terrors, sickness, sin, and death itself; seeing the world's repose is full of anguish, its security without foundation, its fear without cause, its labour without fruit, its sorrow without profit, its desires without success, its hopes without reward, its mirth without continuance, its miseries without remedies; seeing these, and a thousand evils more, are in it, and no one good thing can be had from it, who will be deceived with this vizard, or allured with this vanity hereafter? who will be so withdrawn from the noble service of God, by the love of so fond a trifle as is this world? And this to reasonable men may be enough to declare the insufficiency of this impediment.

SECT. VI.—*How we may avoid the evils of the world.*

BUT yet now, to comply with the promise I made in the beginning of the chapter, I have a word or two, to add in this place, thereby to show how we may avoid the aforesaid dangers of this world, as also, use it to our gain and advantage. And for the first; to avoid the dangers, seeing there are so many snares and traps, as have been declared; there is no other way, but only to use the refuge of birds in avoiding the dangerous snares of fowlers; that is to mount up in the air, and so fly over them all: the wise man says: *Psalm l. A net is cast in vain, before the eyes of them that have wings.* The spies of Jericho, though many snares were laid for them by their enemies, yet they all escaped, for they walked by hills, says the scripture. Which place Origen expounding says,‡ that there is no way to avoid the dangers of this world, but to walk upon hills, and to imitate David, that said, *Psalm cxx. I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall*

* Aug. Ep. 39. † Chrysost. hom. 21. ad pop. Antioch. ‡ Hom. 1. in Josh.

come to me. And then we shall say with the same David, *Psal. cxxiii. Our soul hath been delivered as a sparrow from the snares of the fowler.* We must say with St. Paul, *Phil. iii. Our conversation is in heaven*; and then we shall little fear all these deceits and dangers upon earth. For as the fowler has no hope to catch the bird, except he can by some means allure it to pitch, and come down; so has the devil no way to entangle us, but by saying, as he did to Christ, *Matt. iv. cast thyself down*; that is fall upon the baits which I have laid, and devour them, enamour thyself with them, tie thy appetite to them and the like.

He that will avoid these gross and open temptations, by contemning the allurements of these baits, by flying over them by placing his love and thoughts in the mountains of heavenly joys and eternity, will easily escape all dangers. King David was past them all when he said to God, *Psal. lxxii. For what have I in heaven, and besides thee what do I desire upon earth? For thee my flesh and my heart, hath fainted away: thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.* St. Paul was also past these dangers when he said.* That now he was crucified to the world, and the world to him: and that he esteemed all wealth of this world as mere dung, and that although he lived in flesh, yet he lived not according to the flesh. Which glorious example if we would follow, in contemning and despising the vanities of this world, and fixing our minds on the noble riches of God's eternal kingdom to come, the snares of the devil would prevail nothing at all against us in this life.

Touching the second point, how to use the riches and conveniences of this world to our advantage, Christ has laid down plainly the means, *Luke xvi. Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity.* The rich glutton might have escaped his torments, and have made himself a happy man, by help of worldly wealth, if he had pleased. And so might many a thousand that now live in christianity, and will go to hell for the same cause that the glutton did. O that men would take warning one by another, and be wise while they have time! St. Paul cries out, *2 Cor. ix. He who soweth spa-*

*How to
use world-
ly wealth
to our ad-
vantage.*

* Gal. 6. Phil. I and 1 Cor. 10.

ringly, shall also reap sparingly, and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings. What a plentiful harvest then might rich men provide for themselves, if they would; having such store of seed lying by them, and so much ground offered them daily to sow it in? why do not they remember that sweet harvest-song, *Matt. xxv. Come ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you—for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, &c.* Or if they do not care for this, why do they not fear at least the terrible sentence that will be spoke against them for not doing those works of mercy, *Go now, you rich men, weep, howling in your miseries which shall come to you.*

The holy father St. John Damascen reports* an excellent parable of Barlaam the hermit to our purpose. *A parable.* ‘There was, says he, a certain city, or commonwealth, which used to choose to themselves a king from amongst the poorest sort of people, and to advance him to great honour, wealth, and pleasures for a time; but after a while when they were weary of him, their custom was to rise against him, and to despoil him of all his felicity, yea the very clothes off his back, and so banish him naked into a desolate island far off, where, bringing nothing with him, he should live in great misery, and be put to exceeding slavery forever. Which practice one king, at a certain time, considering, by good advice (for all the others, though they knew that custom, yet through negligence and pleasures of their present felicity, thought not of it, till it was too late) took a resolution with himself to prevent this misery; which was by this means. He saved every day great sums of money from his superfluities and idle expenses; and so secretly made over beforehand a great treasure into that island where he was daily in danger to be sent. And when the time came that indeed they deposed him from his kingdom, and turned him away naked, as they had done the others before; he went with joy and confidence to the island, where his treasure lay, and was received there with exceeding great triumph, and placed presently in greater glory than ever he was before.’

* Joan Dam in hist. Barlaam and Josaphat c. 14.

This parable teaches us as much as possibly can be said in this point. For this city, or commonwealth, is this present world, which advances poor men to authority, that is, such as come naked into this life; and upon the sudden when they least expect it, pulls them down again, and turns them off naked into their graves, and so into another world; where bringing no treasure of good works with them, they are like to find little favour, but rather eternal misery. The wise king, that prevented this calamity, is he who in time of wealth during this life (according to the council of our Saviour Christ) seeks to lay up a treasure in heaven by alms-deeds and other good works, against the day of his death, when he must be banished hence naked, as all the princes of that city were. At which time, if their good deeds do follow them, then, as God promises, they will be happy, and placed in much more glory than ever this world was able to give them. But if they come without oil in their lamps, then there is nothing for them to expect, but *I know you not*. And when they come to be known, or rather discovered, then follows, *Get you away from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire*; which is the last and worse sentence of all. Our Lord defend us from it.

The application of this parable

CHAPTER V.

Examples of true resolution, in the two former points; suffering for CHRIST, and contemning the world. For the better confirmation of the two foregoing chapters.

WHEREAS the two precedent chapters, of contemning the world and suffering for Christ, are of their own nature, and man's unwillingness to suffer, very dreadful and loathsome to flesh and blood, so that divers persons, who otherwise esteem themselves no bad Christians, do conceive a horror and aversion even at the very name and mention of such things, persuading themselves that the necessity of Christian profession requires not any resolution to so high a perfection: I am moved in this place to adjoin to the former treatise, a brief declaration of the practice and exercise of ancient Christians in these two points, whereby their opinions and

The reason of this chapter.

censures may better be seen, than by their words ; and wherein each Christian that lives at this day may behold, as in a table or glass, what becomes him to do when occasion is offered, if he profess to serve under the same banner, and to expect his pay at the hands of the same kingdom and master, as they did.

What has been handled before. Many things have been said before, concerning these two points of the contempt of the world, and sufferance in tribulation. And among other matters, it has been declared that the very foundation of Christian religion, which is the holy

cross, stands principally upon these two pillars. It has been shown how Christ our Saviour, when he sent forth his apostles and disciples, as the first spiritual fathers and masters of the world, instructed them, especially in this doctrine, as most convenient and necessary for the end which he pretends. And for that his divine wisdom did easily foresee, that deeds have much more force to persuade than words, he set forth this doctrine most exactly, in the example of his own life, making the same a pattern of contemning the world, and of suffering for justice ; as also did his apostles and disciples after him, to the true and perfect imitation of their master.

The firm resolution of the apostles. Thus much then has been treated before, and many particulars have been declared, as well of the holy apostles great sufferings in all kind and manner of affliction, as also of their utter despising whatsoever was precious or pleasant in this world, for the perfect serving of their Lord and Master. No allurements of this life could entice them, no dignities delight them, no flattery deceive them, no pleasure prevent them, no labours weary them, no difficulty stop them, no terror or tyranny of mortal men could frighten them from their course begun, as long as their souls remained within their bodies. Some of them ended their lives by the sword, some upon the cross, others were stoned and thrown down from high pinnacles, others were scorched and skinned alive ; and all this to serve perfectly their master, and to stir us up to follow their example. Which thing the learned and devout father, St. John Chrysostom, considering when he treated of the deeds of St. Peter and St. Paul in particular, breaks forth in this following speech :*

* Vid. hist. Sacrat. lib. 6.

‘ O holy and blessed apostles of my Saviour,
 ‘ what thanks shall we yield unto you for all the
 ‘ labours, and toils that you have taken for us ?
 ‘ when I think of thee, O Peter, I fall into admi-
 ‘ ration ; and when I remember thee, O Paul, I
 ‘ fall beside myself, and am oppressed with tears. For
 ‘ what shall I say, or what shall I think, when I behold the
 ‘ afflictions that you have suffered ? how many prisons have
 ‘ you two sanctified ? how many chains have you adorned ?
 ‘ how many torments have you sustained ? how many re-
 ‘ proaches have you received ? O blessed be those tongues
 ‘ of yours, that have been such instruments of the Holy
 ‘ Ghost ; and blessed be your members, imbrued with blood
 ‘ for the love of Christ’s Church. You have truly follow-
 ‘ ed your master in all things, &c. Rejoice therefore, thou
 ‘ Peter, to whom it was given, to die upon the cross, there-
 ‘ by to imitate our Saviour ; and triumph thou Paul, whose
 ‘ head was cut off with the sword for the same cause. O
 ‘ this sword shall be to me instead of a crown ; and the
 ‘ nails wherewith St. Peter was crucified, shall be most pre-
 ‘ cious stones in my diadem.’ Thus much and many things
 more this holy father utters, with great fervour in admira-
 tion of the sufferings of these blessed apostles, whose la-
 bours how much he endeavoured to put in execution in his
 own life, and far he was made partaker of like afflictions,
 may appear to him that will read the ecclesiastical history,
 which declares how he both lived and died in continual tri-
 bulation.*

*The
 speech
 of St.
 Chrysos-
 tom.*

O dear Christian, if we had as tender hearts in contem-
 plation of these affairs, as this holy man of God had, we
 should be of another judgment in many things than we are.
 We see St. Chrysostom was thus moved with the conside-
 ration of these two apostles suffering. But how much
 might be said of all the rest in like manner ? It is written
 by Egessipus,† that lived immediately after the time of St.
 James, who was called the brother of *JESUS*, and was
 left by him as the first bishop of Jerusalem, that he being
 in singular authority and credit for his holiness and wis-
 dom, not only among all Christians, but also among the
 whole nation of the Jews, (for which he was called by the

* Serm. 32 in moral exhortation.
 2. c. 22.

† Egessip. l. 5. hist apud. Eus. l.

name of James *the Just*, as Josephus the Jew reports) yet he chose a most austere and sharp kind of life, never tasting either wine or flesh, or anointing his body with oil, according to the custom of the country. He was so diligent and constant in continually praying upon his knees, that the skin thereof was as hard as the brawn of a camels knee, And being brought forth one day, and placed upon a pinnacle of the temple of Jerusalem, in the presence of infinite people (for that it was on the high feast of *Easter*) and there entreated by all the nobles and magistrates of Jury to speak some word to derogate from Christian religion, with promise of infinite honour, if he would comply with their request: he chose rather to be reviled and stoned by the people, to be thrown down from the pinnacle where he stood, and to have his head cleft asunder with a staff, or instrument that dyers use, rather than to relent in professing that thing which he knew to be true: and so happily ended his life, in the year of Christ 63.

Such was the account that these men made of worldly dignities and promotions, when they brought with them any hindrance to God's perfect service. And such was the ready desire they had to suffer, for their master's honour, on every occasion that was offered. O gentle reader, consider what our Saviour *JESUS* said of these men; *Luke xii. You are they that have remained with me, in my temptations, and I dispose to you, as my Father disposed to me, a kingdom*, how truly on the contrary may be verified of us, that which the same Saviour says in another place: *Luke xviii. In time of tribulation they revolt*: that is, whensoever tribulation falls upon them they abandon Christ.

But let us see now further, how those who followed and lived after the apostles, behaved themselves in this behalf. For the better conceiving whereof, you must remember, that for the space of three hundred years together, after Christ's departure out of this world, he sent also continual temptations; that is to say, continual tribulation, afflictions, and persecutions to his Church upon earth (except only certain short times of breathing) wherein he meant to make evident proof of his servants patience, and of his own power against his enemies. And whereas a little before his departure he forewarned his disciples of these things to come,

The manifold temptations of the primitive church.

assuring them, *Matt. x. that he sent them as sheep in the midst of wolves*; he performed the same not long after, in such sort that it may seem he had broke open all the gates and bars of hell at once, and turned out all the legions of furies, as most ravenous bears and lions, upon these his tender innocent lambs. For in ten general and most dreadful persecutions which, in this time of the first three hundred years, by public authority and commandment were exercised: it is impossible for man to recount either the tyranny and iniquity of the laws, or the barbarous cruelty of the executor, or the strange inventions of torments. And although in the times of trial, as it always falls out, there were divers Christians, who, as Eusebius who writes the history well notes, for the love of the world, and of their own ease, suffered shipwreck of their salvation; yet those also were without number, who, by contempt of the world, did bear out the storm, and persevered faithful. Of whom, some few shall be noted in this following discourse, for our instruction and comfort in like occurrences.

After the death of St. James, before mentioned, and the destruction of Jerusalem, which Josephus the Jew was of opinion to have been hastened by God for the punishment of that murder, Egesippus, and Eusebius report,* that as many of the apostles and disciples of Christ, as were then alive, gathered themselves together, and ordained bishop of Jerusalem in place of St. James, one Simeon the son of Cleophas; which Cleophas, St. Luke names, *Luke xxiv.* for one of the two disciples that went to Emmaus together, and talked with Christ upon the way, after his resurrection. Matthew also, *Matt. xxxviii.* and St. John, *John xix.* do make mention of Mary, the wife of Cleophas, who was continually in company of the Blessed Virgin, mother of our Saviour, at his passion; which Mary being mother to this Simeon, and her husband Cleophas being brother to St. Joseph, as Egesippus holds, Simeon was accounted as a cousin-german to our Saviour JESUS, and by all probability, hath both seen him and heard him in his life time. This holy man then having lived very long in this his charge of bishoprick, and being now a hundred and twenty years old, was in the

St. Simeons martyrdom.

* Joseph, apud Euseb. 1. 1. c. & l. 223. c. 10. 26.

time of the emperor Trajan (St. John the evangelist being dead a little before) accused by certain heretics : who then first (as Egisippus says,* who lived in the same time) began to show themselves openly in the world, because all the holy apostles and others who had heard our Saviour speak, were dead, and therefore these heretics devised now what new opinions and expositions upon scriptures pleased them best. And because this man was the chief pillar that stood against them in defence of the Catholic faith, and apostolical tradition at this day, they caused him cunningly to be apprehended and presented before Atticus then governor of Jury for the emperor. Who after many allurements and threats used with him, when by no means he could move him to relent from his constancy in Christ's service: he gave sentence to have him beaten with whips, and be tormented many days together: at which the old man shrunk not, but endured with most wonderful courage, insomuch that Atticus being astonished, says our author, that one of six score years of age could bear so many torments, commanded him finally to be nailed on a cross, as his master Christ was, and so he died most resolutely for his sake. Neither did he allege his old age or weakness, for any excuse not to suffer for his master.

The history of St. Ignatius.

At the very same time there lived in Asia, a man renowned for his holiness, called Ignatius, a disciple to the apostles, and by them ordained bishop of Antioch, after that Peter had left the same. This man being accused for his faith to the governor of Syria, and standing constant in the confession thereof, was condemned by him to be torn in pieces by wild beasts. Because he was a person of great note, he was sent prisoner to Rome, under the custody of ten soldiers, to suffer there. And although the soldiers upon the way used him very rudely, and kept him strait, yet he found means, either by speech or letters, to comfort all the Christians as he passed by them; but especially, as Eusebius notes,† he inculcated two points to be remembered by them : ‘ First, that they should, above all other things, take heed of new opinions and heresies, which then first began to creep abroad :

Ignatius's rule to discern truth.

* Egesip. apud Euseb. l. 5. c. 26.

† Euseb. l. 3. c. 30.

‘ and secondly that they should stick and cleave most firmly to the tradition of the apostles,’ for the true understanding and interpretation of scripture. That is to say, they should admit no other interpretation but that which all churches by general and uniform consent had received from the apostles; insinuating hereby, that this should be an infallible rule to guide men by, to the world’s end.

Besides this, the good man got time also and opportunity in this journey, to write divers epistles to sundry churches, which Eusebius in his history sets down. And among other things, either being informed, or fearing of himself, that the Christians in Rome, hearing of his coming, would use means with the emperor to save his life, and by that means deprive him of martyrdom, he writ them a most earnest letter, beseeching them not to do so. Out of which letter both Eusebius* and St. Hierom† cite these most excellent words following. ‘ In this my journey says he, ‘ from Syria to Rome, I am forced to fight day and night ‘ with ten leopards, that is to say, with ten soldiers sent to ‘ keep me, who the more benefits I bestow upon them, the ‘ worse and the more cruel they are towards me. But ‘ their iniquity is my instruction, and yet hereby I am not ‘ justified. Would to God I were once come to ‘ enjoy those beasts that are appointed to devour ‘ me. I greatly desire that it may be shortly, ‘ and that they may be stirred up to eat me quickly, lest perhaps they abstain from touching me, ‘ as they have done from the bodies of other martyrs. But ‘ if they should refuse to set upon me, I will entice them ‘ on myself. Pardon me my children, for I know what is ‘ good for me. Now I begin to be *CHRIST*’s true disciple, desiring nothing that is seen in this world with man’s ‘ eyes but only *JESUS CHRIST*, my Saviour. Fire, ‘ cross, beasts, breaking of my bones, quartering of my ‘ members, tearing and renting of my body, and all the ‘ other torments that the devil can invent, let them all come ‘ upon me, only that I may enjoy my *JESUS*.’

The zealous words of St. Ignatius at his death.

Thus far does Eusebius cite the words of St. Ignatius’s epistle, which is yet extant. St. Irenæus‡ and St. Hierom§ do add yet further, that when he came to suffer, and heard

* Euseb. l. 3. c. 30

† Hier. in catal. Scrip.
§ Hier. in Catal.

‡ Iren. l. 5 c. 28.

the roaring of the lions ready to come out upon him, he used these words : ‘ I am God’s wheat, and the teeth of these wild beasts must grind me, to the end I may be pure and good bread for Christ’s table.’

St. Ignatius’s Relics. He suffered, says St. Hierom, in the eleventh year of Trajan’s reign, and upon the year of Christ 110, and his relics were carried back again by Christians from Rome to Antioch, and there are kept without the gate called Daphintica.

Here we see the fervour of this servant of God, we see his constancy, his courage, his comfort in suffering. And how came he, dear brother to this most happy and blessed state ? we hear him say of himself, ‘ That now he begun to be CHRIST’s true disciple, when he desired nothing that man’s eye can behold, but only his Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.’ This burning love then of Jesus did consume in him all other love and affection that hinders worldly men from the like resolution. He was no friend or lover of the world. Hear the saying of another light of God’s Church, who lived at the very same time, and suffered soon after him for the same cause, and spoke with him in his journey towards Rome ; I mean St. Polycarp, who writ thus of Ignatius, to the Phillippenses, presently after his martyrdom. ‘ I beseech you brethren, to yield all obedience where it is due, and to use all patience in your afflictions, according to the examples which you have seen in Ignatius, and other martyrs, as also in St. Paul, and the rest of the apostles, assuring yourselves that these men ran not in vain, but in faith and justice, and therefore are gone to the place which was due to them being now with their Lord, of whose afflictions they were made partakers in this life. They were not lovers of this world, but they loved their master who suffered death for our love, and rose again for our glorification.’ Thus far Polycarp.

And since we have made mention of this rare and worthy man Polycarp ; who although he saw not Christ himself in flesh, yet he lived most familiarly with divers of the apostles, and especially with St. John Evangelist, whose domestical disciple he was many years, and by him made bishop of the church of Smyrna in Asia. And because his fight and martyr-

How primitive Christians came to their constancy.

The history of St. Polycarp.

dom for the Christian religion, followed not long after the death of Ignatius, it is not amiss to speak of him also in this place. The narration is set down at large by Eusebius* and others, out of an epistle written by Christians of the church of Smyrna, who were all present at the whole tragedy of his death. The sum whereof is this: that whereas on a certain day, by the command of the emperor Antonius, incredible and innumerable torments were used against Christians in the city of Smyrna, divers did bear the same with invincible courage, to the singular comfort of their brethren, and to the great admiration of their enemies; although one Quintius that was newly come out of Phrydia, and had rashly offered himself to the torments, before he was sought for, fell shamefully the same day, and denied his profession of the Christian religion.

Dangerous for any man to offer himself to persecution.

Polycarp then, while these things were doing, remained secretly in a house with other Christians whither everything that past was brought to him by the brethren, as soon as it was done; and at length news came that Polycarp himself was sought for. Whereat he, nothing moved, answered with a quiet mind and countenance, that he was ready; meaning indeed to expect the officers there till they came for him. But the Christians that were present with him, forced him, whether he would or no, to retire himself to a little village not far off, where he made his abode for some days, while he was sought for in the city.

During which time he did nothing else, but pray day and night; and that especially for the peace and unity of the Church, because heresies began now to swarm publicly. He had a vision also, which he told to those that were there present with him, signifying that he must go to Christ by fire.

St. Polycarp's greatest care for the church's unity.

At length, the pursuers that had sought all about the city, came by God's permission, to the village where he was, and thereupon he fled by night to another, whither they also followed him. And there finding two children in the street, forced one of them, by beating, to discover the house wherein he lay.

* Euseb. l. i. c. 13 & 14.

Coming therefore into the house, understanding that he was in a chamber above, they sent for him to come down : and although the messenger favouring Polycarp, showed him a way how to escape by another house, yet he refused it, saying, *We have fled enough, let God's will be done.* And so coming down with a cheerful countenance, he bid them heartily welcome, and commanded the meat left in the house to be set before them, beseeching them only to give him one hour's space, wherein to pray to his Lord before he departed. Which they willingly granted, being much moved with his gray hairs and fatherly countenance ; as also cast into admiration with the fervour of his prayers that he made there by himself, whilst they were eating. Which being ended, they took him out, placing him upon an ass, and so led him to the city of Smyrna, very early in the morning, upon the great Sabbath day, having advertised the magistrates before of their coming, who, for that cause, were gathered together with all the people in the market-place.

And to make the matter more solemn, they sent forth from the city one Herod, that was provost of the peace, to meet him and fetch him in. He therefore coming forth with great pomp in his charr, met with Polycarp, and first Smyrna

saluted him with great honour and reverence, desiring him to come down from the ass, and to sit with him in his charr ; and there beginning to flatter him, by saying, You are a grave and wise man ; have respect for yourself. What great matter is it to say, Lord Cæsar ? or to make a sacrifice ? but

Polycarp held his peace ; and when the other went forward using many words to that purpose, Polycarp answered : *Sir, in fine, I am not to follow your counsel.* At which words, he conceiving great disdain, thrust him head-long out of his charr, and with such violence, that he very much wounded his leg in falling. But the old man making no account thereof, followed cheerfully the soldiers who led him.

And when he came to the place where the judges were, he entered in with a cheerful countenance, and much the more, because at the very instant when he entered, there was a clear and loud voice heard from heaven, saying, *Be of good*

St. Polycarp apprehended

St. Polycarp's carriage to Smyrna.

The manner of persecutors speeches.

St. Polycarp's confession before the multitude.

*courage Polycarp, and behave thyself valiantly.** When he came before the high magistrate, called the proconsul, first, there was an infinite outcry of the people against him : which being appeased the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp ; whereto he answered, yes, I am Polycarp. Then the proconsul said, have regard to thy old age, father repent, and say with us, *Let impious men be destroyed* ; by which terms were understood Christians, that refused to adore or sacrifice to their gods. Whereat St. Polycarp turning himself to the multitude, and lifting up his hands to heaven, with a deep sigh said ; O Lord, destroy and take away the wicked, meaning in a contrary sense to them ; then the proconsul said, swear also by Cæsar's fortune, and deny Christ. Whereunto Polycarp answered, I have served Christ now four score and six years, and he never did me any hurt, but much good, how then can I deny my Lord and King, that hitherto has dealt so mercifully with me ? then the proconsul again urged, that he should swear by Cæsar's fortune ; whereunto the other replied, if thou namest Cæsar's good fortune so often for ostentation sake know that I am a Christian, who have nothing to do with fortune ; and if you please to learn what Christian profession is, appoint a day and I will teach thee. Persuade this people, said the proconsul, to be content with that. No, said Polycarp, I esteem them not worthy to be dealt withal in such a matter : but to thee as a magistrate, our profession teaches us to have respect and reverence, so far forth, as it may stand with the safety of our soul, and without prejudice of our religion. So he.

After this, there passed divers other speeches between them, the one threatening torments, beasts, fire, and sword ; and the other showing all desire, and readiness to sustain the same. The people cried out continually, that he might be torn in pieces by wild beasts. But that was denied, because the beasts were wearied out upon other martyrs before. Then they cried out, that he might be burnt alive ; which Polycarp hearing, and remembering the vision, which he had seen in the village before his apprehension, fell down on his knees and prayed, and soon after rising again, turned himself to the people and said, ' Be content, for you shall have your

*Unruly
behaviour
of the
multitude.*

desire, for it is determined that I shall be burnt alive ' and a little after the proconsul gave sentence for his burning.

When he was brought to the fire, he put off his own apparel, but when he came to his shoes he had some difficulty therein, for want of use, being never permitted by Christians to do that office to himself before, every one thinking it fel-

licity to be the first in doing of that service, wheresoever he came, thereby to touch his holy body.* He prayed vehemently in the fire, and gave immortal thanks to Almighty God that he had made him worthy of that day's combat; during which time, the fire divided itself into two parts, and would not touch him, insomuch that the magistrate was constrained to send one to run him through with a sword, wherewith he died. Thus far repeats Eusebius out of the epistle of those men who were present at his martyrdom; and they add further, these words in the same epistle:† ' That the Jews and Gentiles there present, did

suggest to the magistrate, to take heed, lest we Christians should steal away his body, and so begin to honour him ' instead of our crucified God. Upon whose suggestion, ' his body by command, was burnt there in our presence, ' after it was dead, but yet we afterwards gathered up his , bones out of the ashes, and laid them up, as things more precious than gold, or precious stones, ' in a place convenient for such a treasure, hoping that one day God will permit us to come ' together in peace, and to celebrate the festival day of this ' his holy martyrdom.' Thus they. His martyrdom happened in the year of Christ 169.

To be noted in St. Polycarp.

I have been the longer in setting down the combat and end of the saint, because he was a most rare and singular man; and his example may serve us for our instruction to divers purposes; but especially, how we ought to be firm and constant, in holding the general uniform doctrine, and interpretation of scriptures, delivered by tradition from the apostles in the Catholic church, with detestation of all new opinions;

Irenæus's testimony of St. Polycarp's doctrine.

as also St. Ignatius warned before. The holy bishop and martyr of God Irenæus, that lived in this time, and went from Lyons in France into Asia, to see and hear him, reported certain things of

* Euseb. l. 4. c. 4.

† Euseb. l. 4. c. 4. & Niceph l. 3. c. 35.

this blessed man, which I cannot in this place omit, because they may greatly profit such men in these our days, as have grace to be moved or helped with any thing.

‘Polycarp, says he,* was not only instructed by the apostles themselves, but also by them made bishop of the city of Smyrna. He lived familiarly with many that had seen and spoken with our Saviour in flesh, and we in our youth saw him in Asia, for he lived long, and ended his life by a most famous martyrdom. He always taught those things which he had learned of the apostles, and which the Church delivers, and which are only true, which may be proved by the consent of all the churches of Asia, and by the bishops who have succeeded after him. He was a more faithful witness of the truth, than Valentius or Marcion, or all the body of other heretics together, who have brought pestilent new sects into the church. He went to Rome, Anicetus being then bishop, and reduced to the Church and true religion divers that were perverted by the foresaid heretics; and protested openly, that he had received from the apostles themselves, that only and sole truth, which is delivered from the Catholic church. There are yet alive that have heard him tell, how St. John the apostle of our Saviour, being once at Ephesus, going into a common bath, and seeing Cerinthus the heretic therein, ran out again in haste, saying to them that were with him, Let us fly from hence, lest the bath, in which the enemy of God, Cerinthus, remains, fall and destroy us. The same Polycarp, at the time when he was at Rome, meeting by chance with Marcion the heretic, and being demanded of him, whether he knew him or not, answered, Yes, I know thee for the eldest child of Satan. So cautious were the apostles, and their scholars, not so much as to talk with such fellows, as endeavoured by their new commentaries, and expositions of scripture to change the truth before received. And so St. Paul warned us all to do, when he said, *Tit.* iii. Avoid the heretical man, after one or two admonitions, assuring thyself, that such a one is perverse, and sins, being condemned by his own proper judgment.’ Hitherto are the words of holy Irenæus.

*St. John's
hatred a-
gainst he-
retics.*

* Iren. 8. c. 3. apud. Euseb. l. 4. c. 13.

The same Irenæus writing to one Florinus his old acquaintance in the school of St. Polycarp, and now beginning to be a heretic in Rome, speaks as follows,* ‘ These opinions of thine, O Florinus, to speak friendly are not true nor wholesome : these opinions are repugnant to the church. These opinions thou receivedst not by tradition from the priests, that before us were scholars to the apostles. I did see thee when I was but a child, with Polycarp in Asia : at that time thou, living very pompously at the emperor’s court, didst endeavour to maintain thyself in a good opinion with Polycarp. I remember those times well, and they stick in my mind more firmly than other things that passed since. ‘ Insomuch that I can tell at this time, the very place wherein the blessed man did sit when he spoke to us. I can tell the order and manner of his coming in, the form and method of his life, and shape of his body, the manner of his preaching to the multitude. I remember how he was wont to recount unto us, the familiar conversation he had with St. John the evangelist, and with divers others who had seen our Saviour. I remember how he would tell us their speeches, and what he had heard them say of Christ, of his miracles, virtues, and doctrine, which they had seen with their own eyes, and heard with their ears ; which were all agreeing with the scriptures that now we have. These things, through the great mercy of God towards me ; I heard at that time, both diligently and attentively ; not so much committing them to ink and paper, as to the inward cogitation of my mind. And while I live, I do, and shall by God’s holy grace, most carefully renew the memory thereof. And now here before Almighty God, I may truly protest, that if this holy and apostolical priest Polycarp, should have heard of such new opinions, as you defend, he would have stopped his ears and cried out as his custom was, O good God ! to what miserable times hast thou reserved me, to hear these things ! and presently would have risen and run out of the place, where he had been standing or sitting, when such doctrine should have been uttered.’ Hitherto Irenæus.

*The do-
ings and
sayings of
St. Poly-
carp.*

* Iren. ep. ad. Flor. & Euseb. l. 5. c. 9.

And now, dear Christian, who would not be moved with the grave and zealous speeches of these reverend men, that lived so nigh the times of the holy apostles, and of our Saviour himself? how exceedingly great was their care amidst all their tribulations, and at the very time, when they were to depart out of this world (for Irenæus soon after suffered martyrdom) to forewarn Christians to beware of heresy and schism, and to detest all manner of new opinions, commentaries, and expositions upon holy scripture, different from those which the universal succession and tradition of the church had left to them, from the apostles time? they saw well, and were so told by the apostles themselves, that there was no other certain way to understand and hold the truth first planted, but to stick to this tradition delivered by Christ to his church for the understanding of scriptures, and trial of doctrines: which tradition was, by God's appointment, to pass from hand to hand, from bishop to bishop, from doctor to doctor, from council to council, from church to church, from age to age, to the world's end; and without this, they saw by experience of those first heresies that every heretic would, from time to time, cause disturbance in the Catholic Church, by interpreting the scriptures, and wresting them to his own sense. To the end then, that Christ's Catholic people might stand together firmly in unity of faith, and arm themselves jointly in the contempt of this world, and suffering for their master; these holy men did so carefully exclaim against them, having heard from the apostles own mouths, how detestable a thing heresy was in the sight of God; and that wheresoever it entered there was no more hope of any virtue or other good thing helping to salvation. For which cause it is recorded in like manner,* that divers of these first martyrs, being brought forth to die in company of certain heretics, that offered to die also for the defence of Christian religion; they refused to go forth to die in their company, affirming them in truth to be enemies of Jesus Christ, however they made profession to die for him.

A note upon the premises touching the danger of new opinions.

The nature and force of tradition.

And be this spoken by the by, concerning these notable men's zeal in detestation of schism and heresy, and of new

* Appollinær. hier. apud Niceph. l. 4. c. 23.

expositions of holy scripture, against the tradition of the universal church, which no man can think to be from our purpose, if he considers the times wherein we live, and how little this tradition is now regarded by many, in respect of their own new tenets and modern inventions. Which though they endeavour to maintain by sundry passages out of holy scripture, often purposely corrupted, always wrested from the true Catholic sense to their own unwarrantable interpretation, they can never make good, against the unanimity of apostolical tradition which has always persevered in the church of Christ; by which she has been unerringly guided in that faith on which our religion is so grounded, that the gates of hell will not prevail against it; and for which so many holy men have joyfully laid down their lives in all ages, from the beginning of the church.

It follows in the aforesaid history of Eusebius, that St. Irenæus in a short time, to wit, in the next age after the apostles came also to his combat for the confession of his master in the city of Lyons in France; where after infinite torments and afflictions which he suffered, he ended his life the twenty-eighth of June (*An. Dom. 180.*) under the emperor Severus. But before this, he was sent into Asia, to the Christians there, from the Christians in France that lived in persecution; and in the way he had letters also to the bishop of Rome, Eleutherius, in his own commendation. Which letters well declare, what a reverend opinion the martyrs of God had of him. And the other letters that he carried into Asia, set forth the marvellous trial to which our Saviour at that time put his servants: whereof I have thought fit to recite some part in this place, for our instruction, and for our comfort in adversities that befall us.

The letters begin thus: ‘The servants of *JESUS CHRIST*, that dwell at Lyons and Vienna in France, send peace in our Lord *JESUS*, to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia, &c. The greatness of our afflictions which grow upon us in this place, neither can we, nor any man else, express by writing, &c.’ And then they show first how they were forbid by public edict to enter into any public house, booth, or marketplace, or to come abroad out of their own doors. Secondly, they were fetched out by officers from their own houses,

The martyrdom of St. Irenæus.

The letters of Christians suffering persecution in France

led to the market-place, and in the way, reviled, spit upon by the people, beaten with clubs and other weapons, which each man had in his hand; their apparel pulled off from their backs, and this before judgment was given against them, while yet they expected the coming of their president to determine their cause. Who when he came, demanded no other questions of them, but only whether they were Christians or no, commanded all manner of torments to be exercised upon them. And because a noble young gentleman, named Vetius, began to speak a word or two in their behalf, he was also condemned among the rest, as advocate of the Christians. Thirdly, they show that all their friends, acquaintance, and kindred among the Gentiles at that time, forsook them. Their own servants, for fear of torments, came in and accused them most falsely of *eating of man's flesh*;* and that which grieved them most of all, ten of their company, upon the first sight of torments, abjured Christ openly.

And yet, notwithstanding all this, they declared that Christ their Saviour forsook them not in those extremities, but comforted them above all measure, by the noble confessions and combats of divers others, whereof they recite very strange examples: namely of one Sanctus a deacon, who for all the torments the enemies could use upon him, from morning to night, could not be forced to answer the president to any one question that he asked, but only by those Latin words, *Christianus sum*, I am a Christian. *These two words*, says the narration, *served for answers to whatsoever he was asked, either touching himself or others.* The like they write of one Blandina a noble woman, who wearied out all her tormentors, and therefore in a rage, towards the end of the day, they tied her to a great beam, and hanged her up in the air: which beam, because it represented the form of a cross, as she hung upon it, did infinitely comfort both her and other Christians. They declare besides, that their holy old bishop named Pothenus, in whose place Irenæus succeeded, being four score and ten years old, and not able so much as to stand on his feet, was carried to the place by the hands of soldiers, and there

Wonderful constancy of divers martyrs.

* This was a common accusation against Christians in those days in respect of the Blessed Sacrament, which then was held to be Christ's flesh.

ended his life with incredible fortitude. And of the afore-said Blandina, they write, that she being put down from the beam again, was beaten with whips, rent with iron hooks, set upon a burning frying-pan, and after that wrapt in a net and cast among wild bulls. In all which torments she kept a merry countenance, thanking God most heartily for this benefit, and for that she had seen her own children die constantly in the same place for the same cause before her.

The courage of Attalus, the martyr.

They report also of one Attalus, a man of great name and authority in that city, that being drawn forth of his house, he was first led about the theatre, or place of spectacle, with a table borne before him, wherein was written in great Latin letters, *This is Attalus the Christian*: and after-

wards he was abused by the people in all kind of most extreme villainous manners: but yet because of his nobility, the president durst proceed no farther against him, 'till he had writ to Rome to the emperor, and received answer, which was soon after (he in the mean time being kept in prison, where he did very much good,) and then upon the solemn day of the public fairs that were in Lyons he was brought forth again, and first put to fight with divers wild

Great cruelty.

beasts, by which he was much torn and tormented, but not slain. And then after all this he was placed in a chair of burning-iron, and therein examined about his faith. And when the smoke and loath-

some stench of his flesh that broiled, offended them that stood about him, he said to the people, *O brethren, this is indeed to devour man's flesh, whereof falsely you accuse us*. And finally, the narration adds, that after these tyrants

Spite of infidels against relics.

had wasted their fury in the slaughter of so many Christians, that it was a horror to themselves to behold their bodies and bones; yet they were not satisfied. But first caused the said bodies to be

watched in that place for the space of six days together, 'till they were putrified, to the end that Christians should not steal them away, and then also doubting, least some of their relics might be reserved, if they should so abandon them, they burnt all to ashes, and cast the same into the Rhone, that runs through the city of Lyons.

These were the combats whereby Almighty God in those days would try his trusty servants; far exceeding any that

he lays upon us in these latter times, though we complain much more than they did. Hear now another brief description set down by Dionysius bishop of Alexandria, of the things that he and other Christians suffered there in this city, not long after, under Decius, the emperor. He writes the history to the bishop of Antioch, and the same is recorded by Eusebius. 'I speak before God; says he, and

' his divine majesty knows that I speak the truth,

' &c. The persecution began here against us

' before the emperor's edict came forth, as it

' were by a certain prophecy, that shortly it

' would ensue. First they began with a certain

' godly woman named Quinta, whom they drew

' by the heels about the city upon the pavement, and whip-

' ped her naked, and finally, murdered her with stones.

' After that, they came in fury to all our houses, and drew

' us forth, that is, every man his neighbour, according as

' either hatred or covetousness to have his goods, moved

' them. For whatsoever was precious in our houses, they

' took with them, and the rest they cast out into the streets.

' This lasted for divers months, and many noble

' martyrs died in this time, as Appollonia, Sera-

' pion, and others; although some, that were not

' worthy of this conflict, made shipwreck of their

' salvation.

*A most
cruel per-
secution
in Alex-
andria.*

*The fall
of weak-
lings.*

' At length the most horrible edict of Decius against us was published, and then you might see that dreadful sentence of our Saviour fulfilled: *Matt. xxiv.*

' *That the very elect if it were possible, should*

' *be driven to fall.* For first; of all those that

' were rich among us, or of any great calling,

' whereof there were many, some prevented the

' magistrates, and offered themselves voluntary,

' as good subjects, to fulfil the emperor's com-

' mand. Others permitted themselves as un-

' willing to be drawn by the magistrates, to adore

' their gods; others went as allured and constrain-

' ed as it were, by persuasions of their neighbours, friends,

' and kinsfolks; others did it secretly in their own houses

' at home: others went with so evil a will, and with so ill-

' favoured a countenance to sacrifice, that they were laugh-

' ed at by the enemies themselves, because they had not

' courage to refuse it, nor yet heart to do it. Others went

*The danger of
riches in
persecu-
tion.*

*Divers
sorts of
falling.*

to it openly and impudently, affirming that they had never been Christians in their lives : to behold which, made us remember that saying of our Saviour : *Matt. xix. How hard it is for a rich man to be saved.*

Poor men follow easily the example of the rich. ‘ Many of the poorer sort followed the examples of rich men ; some fled, some were taken and carried to prison, and after divers days were induced to forswear *CHRIST*. Others came out and began to suffer torments but presently fainted and denied their faith. But afterwards ensued the glorious spectacle of the chosen martyrs ; whereof the first was old Julian, that could not move by reason of the gout ; yet being set upon a camel, and whipped naked through all the streets of Alexandria, which was very large, was afterwards burnt alive. After him followed Chronicon, Macare, Alexander, Heron, Dioscorus, Ammon, Zeno, Ptolomæus, Ingenus, Mercuria, Dionysia, and others. And the said Dioscorus, because he was but yet a child after a certain time, was let go by the president, hoping that he might be corrupted. But he is here with me very constant, and most ready to sustain a greater conflict when God will call him to it.’

The zeal of Dionysius in his persecution against schism and heresies. Thus writ this blessed man of God ; adjoining many things of his own examinations and sufferings, which for brevity sake I omit : only I cannot let pass that rare zeal which he showed amidst all these afflictions, against schismatics and heretics ; as may appear by those words of his, which he writes in an epistle to Novatus, when he by new inventions began to trouble the church of Rome. These words are recorded by Eusebius,* and are these which follow, ‘ It should have been thy duty,

Martyrdom at heretics hands more commendable than at infidels. ‘ O Novatus, says he, to have suffered all inconveniencies in the world, rather than to have broken the concord of God’s Church. ‘ And truly that martyrdom which is suffered for the defence of the consent and unity of *CHRIST*’s church, is no less, but rather much more, commendable, in my opinion, than that which is suffered for not sacrificing to idols. For that in the latter, a man suffers martyrdom for saving his own soul

* Euseb. 1. 6. cap. 37.

‘ but in the former, he suffers for saving the whole church. Thus far Dionysius.

At the very same time with this holy man though somewhat younger, lived the famous prelate and martyr of God, St. Cyprian; who (as by his own writings appears, and is recorded by Pontius his deacon* that lived with him, and by St. Hierom,† St. Augustine,‡ and others that followed him) not only made many martyrs in his time by his exhortations, and by his example in suffering, but also concluded his own life, with a most famous martyrdom, sustained with all alacrity for his master’s sake. This was that most excellent man, whom you have heard before to confess the great force of Almighty God’s grace towards a good life, and extirpation of sin, which he felt after baptism, contrary to that which he persuaded himself before, thinking it altogether impossible, that so dissolute a course of life, as he had followed, whilst he was a heathen, could be changed into virtue, as before you have heard himself declare; and yet he arrived to that perfection of manners and conversation, that he became a mirror to the world; and himself confesseth, that his state was, *Mors criminum, vita virtutem*, the death of vices, and life of virtues: that is to say, that all the vices are extinguished and dead in him, and all virtues flourished. This so excellent man, I say, our Saviour Christ so exercised in all tribulation after his conversion, as there was no kind of men from whom he received not affliction: I mean Pagans, Heretics, Schismatics, and seditious people, weaklings that fell in time of persecution, confessors that stood constant, but were troublesome, dissolute Catholics that lived disorderly, and provoked God’s wrath by their careless and negligent lives.

*Of St.
Cyprian.*

*The variety of
affliction
which
God laid
upon St.
Cyprian.*

And as for the Pagans, it is evident that their special hatred was against him, and continual molestation in Carthage. For that notwithstanding he was a nobleman, and a great counsellor, rich and potent, and admirable for his eloquence before his conversion; and after his conversion left freely, not only all those honours and wealth of the world, but his

*Pagans
hatred
against
St. Cy-
prian.*

* Pont. in. vit. Cyp. † Hier. in catal. ‡ Aug. Serm. de St. Cyprian

wife and children also, commending them to a priest, named Cecilius, that had been the cause of his conversion, and never had conversation with them afterward.* Not only all this, I say, and the great change of life before mentioned, could mitigate the hatred of the Gentiles against him, for making himself a Christian, but rather increased the same. And so seeing him made both priest and bishop, soon after his conversion, in the year of Christ 250, they went about not only by scoffs and slanders to defame him, and bring him to contempt, calling him Capreanum, which is goat-herd, instead of Cygrianum, as Lactantius saith,† and some other, Coprianum,‡ a more contemptible word; but moreover, whensoever the said Pagans met together in any public assembly, they cried out commonly to have Cyprian to the lions to make them pastime.§ And finally, they never ceased until they had his blood indeed.

St. Cyprian's vexation by heretics.

As for heretics that arose in his time, namely, Marcionists, Montanists, Valentinians; and many others raised before him, as Origenists, also Novatians, and the like, that sprung up in his very days: it is notorious, by his works, how he was troubled with them, especially, when he said Novatians that having first made a schism both against himself and Cornelius the bishop of Rome, afterwards out of spleen ran into this heresy, that such as did fall in time of persecution, could not be received again, or absolved by any priest, but were to be left to God's judgment.|| Which kind of men and all other that impugned the union of the Catholic church, and scandalized the gentiles by their division, this blessed man did so earnestly condemn and detest, that he did not only every where in his works affirm, that such men cannot be saved by any manner of good life whatsoever, no, though they should suffer death and martyrdom for the name of Christ, but went also further through this zeal against heretics, affirming that these were not Christians, not truly baptized, and, consequently, that such of them as came afterwards to be converted, and made Catholics, were to be re-baptized. Which opinion, as it was true in such

* Pontius in Vita. Cyp. † Lact. l. 5. c. 1. ‡ Stercorarium. § Cyp. Epist. 55. ad. Cornelium.

|| Cyp. Ep. 52. & Aug. de agone Christiano, c. 31

heretics, as did not use the true form of words, or intention of Catholic baptism, so in others it was reprov'd by the general Church: whereunto this holy father, as both St. Augustine, and St. Hierom, do hold, and never meant to repugn. But by this we may see the conflict he had with these kind of men.

There followeth the third sort of impugnors, who exercised this holy man, whom he calls schismatical, turbulent, and seditious emulators of his, whereof the principal were certain priests of Carthage, named Felicissimus, Fortunatus, and three or four more, who, as heads being set on, and borne out by a certain heretical bishop of Africa, named Donatus, made a strong faction against the holy man, which continued from his first entrance into that see, even to the day of his martyrdom, to wit, for eleven or twelve years whilst he was bishop; and this hatred of these men was so implacable against the good man, as he every where complains, that they not only impugned him in Africa, but went also to Rome against him, accusing him to Cornelius the Pope. And moreover, in Carthage, they not only alienated and stirred up against him those Christians that were weak, and had fallen in time of persecution, as also the confessors of Christ that were in prison; but also conspired, as well by Heretics as Pagan persecutors, against him, insomuch, that for them he durst not return home secretly to his church from the place where he lay hidden, no not at the very feast of Easter itself. You shall hear some of the good man's complaints in his own words, for this he writes in great affliction of spirit unto his people of Carthage.

Hoc quorundam Presbyterorum malignitas & perfidia perfecit, &c. 'This hath the malignity and perfidiousness of certain priests, my emulators, brought to pass, that I could not return unto you before Easter day, for that they being mindful of their old conspiracy against me, and retaining that old poison in their hearts against my being bishop, which long ago they conceived, or rather against your suffrage and God's judgment for me: they have renewed their old assault against me; and have again laid for me their accustomed snares, and sacrilegious machinations.' *And again in the same epistle.* 'What pains and punishments do I suffer, my dear brethren that I cannot for the present come unto you, and speak with

*A pitiful
complaint
of St. Cy-
prian.*

‘ every one of you, to instruct you in our Lord’s
gospel? Is it not sufficient, that my banish-
ment from you hath endured now two years, with
this lamentable separation from your eyes and
countenance, which causeth such sorrow and
sighs in my heart, that I am continually afflicted to see
myself solitary without you? Tears do run day and
night from my eyes, that I being your bishop, and you
loving me with such fervour as you do, I cannot enjoy
your embracing, and above all it afflicteth me, that in this
great care and solicitude which I have of your souls, and in
this great necessity (of so extreme persecution, as now
reigneth) I cannot so much as make any excursion unto you
by reason of the threats and snares of certain perfidious men,
which by our coming, would make a greater tumult, and
increase the persecution, &c.’ Thus he.

But yet further you must know, that these men had not
only done this, but conspired also with the heathen magis-
trate against him (a strange passion of hatred in Christian
priests!) as himself writeth in the same epistle, saying,
Persecutio hæc est alia, & alia tentatio, &c. ‘ This is ano-
ther persecution and another temptation. These five
priests, to wit Felicissimus, and his fellows, are nothing
else but those five chief Christian men, which of late
were seen to join themselves to the magistrates in pub-
lishing the emperor’s edict against Christians, thereby to
overthrow our faith, and by their own prevarication against
the truth, to draw into deadly snares the tender hearts of
their brethren.’

The same good man seeing also, that after his vexation
by them in Africa, they resolved to go and accuse him in
Rome, to Cornelius the Pope, as has been said, wrote a
large and vehement epistle to the said Cornelius against
them, not to believe their false suggestions, wherein
among other things he has these words* *Roman cum men-
daciolorum suorum merce navigaverunt, quasi veritas post
eos navigare non posset, &c.* ‘ They have sailed to Rome
with their merchandise of lies, as though truth could not
sail thither after them, and convince with certain proba-
tion deceitful tongues. Truly, brother, this is true mad-
ness, not to think that lies do not long deceive, and

* Cyp. ep. 55, ad Cornel.

‘ that the night endureth no further, but until the day be clear, &c.

And yet further to the said bishop of Rome in the same epistle, he openeth the matter more particularly and pathetically in these words : *Dico provocatus, dico dolens, dico compulsus, &c.* ‘ This I am to tell you, I do it by provocation, I do it with sorrow, I do it by compulsion. When ‘ a bishop, (meaning himself) is chosen into the place of ‘ him that is dead ; when the sufferage of the people in all ‘ peace, is given to the same ; when the said bishop is ‘ seen to be protected in persecution of God’s own help, ‘ when he is faithfully joined, and united unto his fellow- ‘ bishops, and proved now four years in his bishopric attending in time of peace to the observation of ecclesiastical discipline, and in the tempest of persecution, prescribed by name, and designed to death, demanded many ‘ times by the infidels to be delivered over to Lions, and ‘ honoured* in the Circus and Ampitheatre (where spectacles are exhibited) with the testimony of God’s love and ‘ favour, and (even in these very days, while I write this unto you,) he was demanded again to be given unto Lions, by ‘ the universal clamour of his countrymen in Carthage in ‘ the said Circus ; when the people by a public edict were commanded to meet there to do sacrifice.’ And when ‘ such a man, most dear brother, is seen to be impugned ‘ by a company of desperate, and lost men, that are out of ‘ the Church, it is evident enough, who it is that impugn- ‘ eth not Christ, but his adversary.’ Thus much St. Cyprian of himself, and of his adversaries, and by way of modesty in a third person, of his own favour and grace with Christ our Saviour.

There followeth a fourth conflict of his with certain weak Christians, that through fear and terror fell in time of persecution, and did either yield to sacrifice, or to offer incense, or to do any other religious honour unto the Pagan Idols. And the first sort of these were called *Sacrificati*, the second *Thurificati*, the third by the common name of *Idolaters*. Whereunto there was a fourth sort adjoined, named *Libellatici*† that compounded in secret with the heathen magistrate, and so in secret denied Christ. These kind of people

St. Cyprian’s
conflict
with those
that fell.

Four
sorts of
them that
fell.

* In Circo & Ampitheatre.

† Cyp. Ep. 52, ad Anton.
15*

then brought two great afflictions upon this holy bishop St. Cyprian. First, to see them fall and renounce Christ, as many of them did, and some amongst them with great impudency, which was no small tribulation to so zealous a pastor, both in respect of their own perdition, as also of the scandal and loss of others by their example. The second affliction was that after this great and heinous sin committed, many of them making lesser account thereof than they ought, were not ashamed to use importunity for their reconciliation, and admittance into communion again, which St. Cyprian, as a grave defender of ecclesiastical discipline, liked not, but would have them first do convenient penance, and give satisfaction by long grief and sorrow for so grievous an offence. Whereby divers of them fell out with him, especially being set on, as he complained by his adversaries, Felicissimus and his companions, and the heretical bishop, Donatus, their patron and protector.

And to this there was added another difficulty of more importance than the former, that whereas a good and godly custom had been brought in for many years in those times of persecution, that such as had fallen into the said persecution, before their being received to communion again, by the bishop they should go to the confessors that lay in prisons, and ask them for forgiveness also, for the scandal and injury that they had done to them by denying Christ, whom the other had so valiantly confessed under torments and pressures. This custom, I say, in the end grew to this abuse, that divers that were fallen, contemning as it were, the bishop's authority, would only make suit to the confessors in prison, *to have peace with them*, for that was the word then used, and thereupon to have their letters of recommendation to the bishop to be admitted again: which recommendations they would so urge oftentimes as if it were a commandment and not an entreaty. And on the other side again, divers of those confessors living in prisons, showed themselves very indiscreet, in recommending men upon particular affections, without ground or judgment; and yet were so peremptory therein, that they would think themselves contemned and injured, if the bishop did not presently admit and absolve whomsoever they commended: yea although it were in universal, *as such a man and all his friends, and family, not naming who they were:*

St. Cyprian's
conflict
with the
Confessors.

Which St. Cyprian calls,* *Incertam & cæcem petitionem, invidiam cumulantum*. An uncertain and blind petition, heaping envy upon him. *Late enim patet* says he, *ille cum suis, &c.* 'It is a great generality to say, let him be admitted with his, &c.' And further he signified that such as were of lesser edification in the prisons, were always most forward to recommend others, and most impatient of denial, especially they being set on also by Felicissimus, and his faction, as St. Cyprian complained, who, by this means, had not only them, and such as had fallen, but the confessors also in prisons, set against him.

Which being so, we may easily imagine, with how many afflictions the heart of this holy man was environed at one time, especially at such a time, when the external persecution of the Pagans was so fierce and cruel, as St. Cyprian himself describes,† when he said : *Tormenta venerent, &c*

'Torments are come upon us, and torments
' without end, either of the tormentor, or of the *The many*
' tormented : Torments without the comfort of *difficulties*
' death, granted unto them : Torments that do not *of good St.*
' send a man to his crown, by martyrdom, but do Cyprian.
' entertain him in tortures, so long until he faint, and lose
' his crown, except some such as by God's special favour
' being taken from this danger, do profit so much under
' these tortures and tormentors, as they get the crown of
' glory, not by the end of their tortures, but by the swift-
' ness of dying.' So St. Cyprian.

But yet, what ? Did he lose his courage, think you, in God, for all these difficulties, and miseries external and internal ? No truly, but showed his mind to be invincible. For first of all, considering that the emulation and contradiction of Felicissimus, and his company, were the chief causes of stirring up others against him, especially in Rome, by threats and menaces, made by them to Cornelius the Pope, who seemed somewhat to be moved therewith ; this good man wrote unto him in these words ; *Manere apud nos debet, Frater Charissime, fidei robur immobile, &c.* 'There
' ought to remain in us, most dear brother, an immoveable
' strength of faith, and a most stable, and constant virtue
' of fortitude against all incursions of adversaries : even
' as a rock in the sea doth resist with its main might, all

* Cypr. ep. 11 ad Martyrs & Confessors. † Cypr. ep. ad presb.

‘ the scourges of floods and waves of the tempestuous sea ;
 ‘ neither is it any matter whence terror or danger
 ‘ be offered to a bishop, which by his office and vocation
 ‘ is every where subject to terrors and peril, and by
 ‘ them is made glorious. And we must think upon
 ‘ the threats and menaces of Gentiles and Jews against us,
 ‘ for so much as we see that Christ our Saviour was taken by
 ‘ his brethren, *Mark* xiv. and betrayed by one of his apos-
 ‘ tles, whom himself had chosen. And in the very begin-
 ‘ ning of the world, no other man slew just Abel, *Gen.* iv.
 ‘ but his own brother ; nor did any other persecute Jacob
 ‘ in his flight, but his brother : nor was Joseph sold, *Gen.*
 ‘ xxxvii. but by his brethren. And in the gospel we read,
 ‘ *Matt.* x. that our domestic enemies shall be most dange-
 ‘ rous unto us ; and that those shall betray us, who were
 ‘ first joined unto us, by the sacraments of unanimity.
 ‘ Wherefore it imported not who betray, or persecute, when
 ‘ God, by suffering us to be betrayed, or persecuted, dis-
 ‘ poseth us thereby towards our crown of glory. Neither
 ‘ is it shame for us to suffer that at our brother’s hands,
 ‘ which Christ suffered at his ; nor is it any glory for them
 ‘ to do that against us, their brother, that Judas did against
 ‘ Christ his Lord and Master.’

Thus wrote that blessed martyr amidst all his difficulties,
 concerning this first sort of his domestic adversaries, Feli-
 cissimus and Fortunatus, and the rest of their most unhap-
 py and unfortunate fellows, who first made this division,
 which afterwards for many ages could not be extinguished.
 For that hereof ensued both the sects of Novatians, and
 Donatists, which so much, and so long, did vex the Chris-
 tian world. And as for Felicissimus, the chief instrument
 of this faction, St. Cyprian writeth again to Cornelius, the
 bishop of Rome, in these words both of him and his com-
 pany. *De istis vero quid dicam, qui nunc ad te cum Feli-*
cissimo, omnium criminum reo, navigaverunt, &c. ‘ What
 ‘ shall I say of these companions that are gone by sea to-
 ‘ wards you, together with Felicissimus, that is guilty of
 ‘ all kinds of wickedness ? Which wickedness he expres-
 ‘ seth in another place in the same epistle : that he was an
 ‘ enemy to Christ, author of sedition, deceiver and coze-
 ‘ nor of money committed unto him, a deflowerer of virgins,
 ‘ a corrupter of men’s wives, a violator of wedlock, and
 ‘ the like.

But now for the other two sorts of people, set on, and incensed by these, to wit, *Lapsi & Confessores*, that is, weaklings that fell in time of persecution, and confessors that stood in prison; St. Cyprian showed also no less courage and resolution, to resist their importunities, and reform their excesses, than he did towards the those that were seditious: so as unto every part, that good man turned himself with his pen and authority, though he durst not show his face for the present, in respect of his many enemies. And amongst other diligences, he boldly excommunicated both Felicissimus and all his company, commanding all his priests and deacons, and other people, under the pain of spiritual censures, to avoid them. He wrote also a book of the unity of the Church, to show the misery of seditious people that were separated from the same. And more, he wrote a book, *De lapsis*, to wit, of the grievous offence of those that fell, and denied Christ in time of persecution; laying before their eyes the most damnable state wherein they were, and consequently the deep sorrow, penance, and satisfaction which they were bound to do, for saving of their souls: inveighing most sharply against such, as either were negligent in this point towards themselves, or rash and importunate to procure reconciliation to others, without due satisfaction. *Contra, Evangelii vigorem* said he, *contra Domini & Dei legem, temeritate quorundam laxatur incautis communicatio: irrita & falsa pax datur, periculosa dantibus, & nihil accipientibus profutura.* 'Against the vigour of the gospel, and against the law of our Lord, and God, the communion or reconciliation of such as have fallen, is enlarged by the rashness or temerity of certain people: and vain peace is given them, dangerous to the givers, and nothing profitable to the receivers.'

St. Cyprian's sentence, concerning them that fall.

Thus he. And how resolute he was against these kind of men that by importunity would be admitted, he showed in his aforesaid epistle to Cornelius,* if there be any, said he, 'that think themselves to be able to return to God's church again, not by prayers and entreaty, but by threats; not by lamentations and satisfactions, but by terrors; let such men know for certain, that against them the Church of Christ is shut, and that his tents by his defence are strong and invincible, and will yield to no threats whatsoever:

* Cypr. ep. 55, ad Cornel

‘ for that a priest, holding the gospel of God, and observing the precepts of Christ, may be slain, but he cannot be overcome.’

And finally, he checked in many places the presumption of such confessors, as immodestly did either vaunt of their own sufferings or importune their bishop to receive into communication such friends of theirs as had fallen, and had not done due penance for the same. ‘ What

Against presumption of confessors. ‘ stripes, what whips do we deserve, saith he in one place, when confessors themselves, that ought to be an example of good life unto others, do observe no discipline ; but that their proud,

and unshamefaced bragging of confessing Christ, doth puff them up and make them insolent ?’ And lastly, he omitted not also to reprehend sharply the negligence of other Christians, both ecclesiastical and temporal, that lived evil in those days, showing that God had revealed unto him, that this was the cause of those great and grievous persecutions, that fell upon them that time : he beginneth his discourse thus.* *Si cladis causa cognoscitur, medela vulneris invenitur.* ‘ If the true cause of our misery be known, then is the salve of our wound easily found out.’

And then he lays down all the variety of sins in use at that day, as wantonness, covetousness, excess of apparel and diet, deceit, dissention, oppression of the poor, negligence of devotion, contempt of penance, alms, and other religious works. And thus passed over this holy bishop the whole course of his life ; until it came to his own lot to end the same with a most glorious martyrdom. And I have detained myself somewhat longer in the history of this man’s life and actions, state and condition, for that it seemeth to represent unto us a perfect spectacle of a true resolved Christian in the service of God. Now shall we add briefly that which ensueth concerning his death and martyrdom.

When the edict of the emperor Valerian against Christians was published in Rome, in the year of Christ 261, whilst St. Cyprian was in banishment near Carthage, he having received news thereof, by some that he had sent for that purpose to Rome, advertised one Successus a bishop, of the whole matter, and by him, the rest of the brethren in Africa, in these words :† ‘ Brother Successus, know you

* Cypr. ep. ad præf.

† Cypr. Lib. 5, ep. 1. 9.

‘ that the men whom I sent to Rome, are returned, and do
 ‘ bring for certain that Valerian the emperor has
 ‘ writ to the senate, that all bishops, priests, and
 ‘ deacons, be executed speedily, &c. The copy
 ‘ of which letters we hope will quickly come
 ‘ hither, and so we are resolved by God’s grace
 ‘ to suffer all, expecting, at the mercy of our
 ‘ Lord, a crown of life everlasting. Know you also that
 ‘ *Sixtus the bishop of Rome was put to death the eighth
 ‘ day before the Ides of August last. I beseech you that
 ‘ these things may be signified by your means to all our
 ‘ fellow-bishops in those provinces, to the end that by
 ‘ their good exhortations, the whole brotherhood of Chris-
 ‘ tians may be strengthened and prepared to this spiritual
 ‘ combat that is imminent; and that no man in these times
 ‘ think so much upon death, as of the immortality of which
 ‘ is to follow death. Let every man, I say, with full faith
 ‘ and all virtue, dedicated to our Lord, rejoice rather than
 ‘ fear in this confession which we must make, assuring
 ‘ ourselves, that the true soldiers of *CHRIST* our God,
 ‘ will not be slain, but crowned therein.’ So he.

St. Cyprian’s epistle written a little before his death.

And not many days after this, he living in certain orchards or gardens in the country, was advertised by his friends, that some men were sent to take him, and bring him to the city of Utica; whereupon he fled. And lest any man should think, perhaps, that it was out of fear, he wrote an epistle the last that is extant of his writing, to the priests, deacons, and people of his Church of Carthage, where he was bishop, showing them the reason why he had retired himself from the hands of the persecutors, in these words.†
 ‘ When it was wrote to us, dear brethren, that officers
 ‘ were sent to lead me to Utica, by the counsel of our dear
 ‘ friends I was content, upon just cause, to retire from
 ‘ our orchards: for it seemed to me convenient
 ‘ for a bishop to make his last confession in that
 ‘ city where he has governed God’s Church, to
 ‘ the end that by his confession, he may honour
 ‘ his own flock of people. And it seemed to me,
 ‘ that the honour of our glorious Church of Car-

The last letter that ever St. Cyprian wrote-

St. Cyprian would die at Carthage, and not at Utica.

* Sixtus died three days before St. Laurence. † Lib. 5, Ep. 1.

‘ thage, should be much diminished at this time, if I the
 ‘ bishop thereof, should receive my sentence and death in
 ‘ Utica. For which cause, I always desired and prayed
 ‘ Almighty God, that I might make my confession, and
 ‘ suffer in Carthage, and from thence depart to my Lord.
 ‘ So when we abide here at present in a very secret place,
 ‘ expecting the return of the proconsul from Rome to
 ‘ Carthage, who will bring with him, I doubt not, the deter-
 ‘ mination of the emperor, touching both bishops and lay-
 ‘ men, that are Christians ; and will decree that, which
 ‘ our Lord for the present, will have to be done. And as
 ‘ to what concerns you, my dearest brethren, according to
 ‘ the discipline which you have always received from me
 ‘ out of our Lord’s commandments, observe all peace and
 ‘ tranquility among yourselves. Let no man raise tumults
 ‘ touching the doings of his brethren. Let no man offer
 ‘ himself to the* persecutors ; but when he is apprehended
 ‘ then let him speak, for that in that instant God will speak
 ‘ in us, who rather will have us confessors than professors
 ‘ in his cause. Touching other things that I would have
 ‘ you observe, I hope before my sentence be given, by our
 ‘ Lord’s instruction, to dispose in general. *CHRIST JE-*
 ‘ *SUS* keep and preserve you in his Church.’

Soon after this was writ, that is, upon the thirteenth day
 of September, as Pontius† and others write, two persecu-
 tors came suddenly upon him, and apprehending him,
 brought him to the new proconsul, called Galerius Maxi-
 mus, to Carthage; where after a glorious confession of his
 faith, the particulars whereof are too long to be

*The mar-
tyrdom of
St. Cypri-
an.*

set down, his sentence was read, that he should
 be beheaded. Whereunto St. Cyprian answered.
Deo gratias, God be thanked ; and so the next
 day after, received his martyrdom at a place call-
 ed Sexti, not far from Carthage, closing his own eyes, with
 all peace and comfort of mind, and commanding twenty
 crowns of gold to be given to him that cut off his head,
 And Pontius, that was there present adds these words :
 ‘ The brethren stood round about him, weeping, and cast
 ‘ their napkins and prayer-books before him, that none of
 ‘ his blood might be sucked up by the ground. His body,

* This also does St. Augustine repeat out of this place. Lib. 1 cont.
 Ep. Gaudent. † Pont. in vita upr. de quo Hieran. in catal. vir. illust.

by reason of the curiosity of the Gentiles that
 ‘ pressed about him, was buried for the present St Cyprian’s solemn
 ‘ in a place hard by, but the night following it burial with
 ‘ was taken thence again by the Christians, and tapers.
 ‘ carried solemnly with torches and wax-tapers to
 ‘ the possession of one Macrobius Candidus, in the way
 ‘ called Appellensis, nigh the fish ponds, &c.’

And the reverend opinion of this man’s sanctity was so great among Christians, even presently after his death, that they built churches in his honor and memory, as appears by the history of St. Victor, Churches erected to St. Cyprian, with solemn festival days. bishop of Utica, who lived the next age, and records in his first book, *De persecutione Vandalica*, how that the heretical Vandals that were Arians, overthrew two goodly churches in Africa, dedicated to St. Cyprian; the one in the place where he was martyred, called Sexti, the other in the place where his body was buried, called Mappalia. St. Augustine also in his confessions, *lib. 5. cap. 8.* makes mention of a church in Africa dedicated to St. Cyprian, where Monica his mother prayed for him at his departure towards Italy. And in divers places he mentions the solemnity which yearly was celebrated on the day of his martyrdom, which day, according to the Church’s phrase, he calls his nativity.* And in his tenth tome, he has a whole sermon made on the feast of St. Cyprian’s nativity, of which sermon, not only venerable Bede in his commentary upon the second epistle to the Ephesians, but also Possidius, St. Augustine’s scholar in Indiculo, makes mention. And finally St. Augustine everywhere, not only makes most honourable mention of this blessed martyr, but also against the Donatists,† desires to be helped by his prayers now in heaven. Wherefore his example ought greatly to move us.

I might here recount many other persecutions, The last general persecution under Dioclesian and others. and the singular combats of infinite particular men, which would never, I dare say, weary the Christian reader. But yet they would be too long for this place, Eusebius affirms, that to set down the combat sustained in his time, under Dioclesian, Maximian, Maximinus, and other tyrants, (which

* Vide Ep. 120, ad. Honor. c. 5, & ferm. 12, Tom. 10. † Lib. 5. de Bapt. cont. Donat. c. 17.

were the last general afflictions before the peace restored by the great Constantine) would be a matter of an infinite volume. For, says he,* the persecution began in the month of March, when Christians were ready to celebrate the feast of Christ's holy passion. At which time, Dioclesian's first edict was, That all Christian churches throughout the whole world, should immediately be overthrown, all pastors thereof taken, and by all manner of torments that man's

A time of trial. wit could invent, forced to sacrifice, together with their people. 'Then, says Eusebius, was it a

time when each man might easily see who loved the world or who loved God; who was a good Christian, and who was a counterfeit; who was true corn, and who was chaff. Many lost their souls, says he, in this combat, and many got eternal crowns. The edict was executed with all rigour and fury throughout all provinces at once, and divers were the end of such as came into trial. But the infinite glory of those that conquered, surpassed far the infamy of those that fell.'

And the enemy in the end, being utterly confounded, would gladly have seemed to have brought that to pass, which he neither did nor could. For when by force he had drawn Christians to the temples of the idols, he would have had it seem, that they came voluntarily; and when men would not sacrifice, he was desirous, at least, that they should permit him to say and publish, that they had sacrificed. Others, being beaten down upon their knees with clubs, were reported to have kneeled of their own accord to adore the gods; whereof some cried openly notwithstanding, that they neither had nor would do so, for any torment that could be laid upon them. But the more resolute sort were dealt with in a most cruel and barbarous manner, without measure, reason or order. Whereof you may read both many and strange examples in the eighth and ninth books of Eusebius, who writ the things as he saw them pass. And when our Saviour permitted all

A comfortable consideration. these extremities to fall upon his Church, then was the time nearest that he had determined to beautify her on earth, with greatest peace, rest, riches and glory; even as he did immediately after, by

* See Euseb. toto. l. 8. c. 3. & denceips. l. 9

converting the emperor Constantine, to be so zealous a Christian.

And here ends the history of Eusebius, concerning the conflicts of the first three hundred years after Christ's departure. But the ecclesiastical writers that succeeded him, each man in his age, declare that after the times of Constantine, the Catholic church enjoyed not long her temporal peace, but had her exercise from time to time, although in another sort than before : that is to say, not so much by Pagans, as by such as had been her own children, a far more loathsome, odious, cruel and dangerous affliction than the former. For as soon as Constantine was dead, and had left the Roman empire divided among his three sons : one of them who governed all the East, being corrupted by his wife, became an Arian heretic. By whom, and by some other princes, infected afterwards with the same heresy, the church of God sustained incredible distress for many years together.

*The end of
Eusebius's
history.*

*The perse-
cution of
heretics
more cruel
than of
pagans.*

Constan-
tius.

It would be endless to recount the tribulations that fell upon the church of God, and the Catholic defenders thereof, under this one emperor, in three or four and twenty years space that he reigned :* who beginning first with the slaughter of his father's friends and kindred, as namely his two uncles, Constantius and Anibalianus, and others, passed to the persecution of priests and bishops, that were contrary to his Arian sect and fashion. But above all others were famous in this persecution three most excellent men,† St. Athanasius of the east church, archbishop of Alexandria in Ægypt, and St. Ailarus of the west church, bishop of Peictiers in France, together with‡ Eusebius bishop of Vercels in Italy, of whose vexations, exiles, afflictions, imprisonments, lies and calumnies raised against them, as well by secular as ecclesiastical judges, synods and councils violently and unlawfully gathered by the power, authority, force and fury of their enraged heretical emperor, several

*The perse-
cution of
Constan-
tius
the empe-
ror.*

* Zosimus. Entrop. & Victor. in Constantio. An. 337.

† Athan in Apol. ad. Constantium. Theod. 1, 2, Zozim. 1, 3, Socart. 1. 2, Histor. Hila. 2 1, 3, in Constantium Ruff. lib. hist. 1.

‡ Ruff. 1, 2, cap. 27; Socrat. 1, 3, cap. 4. Theod. 1, 3, cap. 4, Zozim 1, 5, cap 11.

books might be made. And yet the heavenly vigour of Almighty God's eternal grace was sufficient so to strengthen these his servants, that they were not conquered but made conquerors in this conflict. And although it was published everywhere by the enemies of God's church, that they were seditious, headstrong, and troublers of the public peace, because they stood out against the emperor and his heretical faction, in defence of Catholic truth; yet they were known then, and held ever since, for great and true servants of Almighty God, and have been declared so by numerous testimonies and miracles from his divine majesty, in their justification and defence. And so much for the time of Constantius, omitting infinite other things that might be rehearsed to this purpose.

After this Constantius the heretic, succeeded Julian the apostate: who having been brought up in the Christian religion during his youth coming afterwards to the imperial crown, first of all emperors, became an apostate, forsook Christ, fell to pagan idolatry again, and showed himself as pernicious an enemy, as ever the Christian religion had before, or after him. Of whom Ruffinus, that lived at the same time, writes thus: * 'He was a more cunning persecutor than the rest, and consequently more cruel; proceeding not so much by force and torments, as by rewards, honours, flatteries, persuasions and deceit. By which means he overthrew more souls than if he had proceeded altogether by violence.'

The worthy father St. Gregory Nazianzen, writes two large orations of this man's actions, and shows that in his youth, both himself and St. Basil were acquainted with Julian in the grammar-school. At which time, he says, they foresaw great wickedness in him; notwithstanding, at that time, he seemed very devout, and for devotion sake, though a great prince, he would needs take upon him the office of lector in the Catholic church. And besides that, says St. Gregory, he also began to build churches to Christian martyrs. But when he came to be emperor, he washed off his baptism with blood: *Manusque suas*, says he, *† profanavit, ut nimirum eas ab incruento illo Sacrificio, per quod nos Christo, ipsiusque, passionibus & divinitati*

* Ruff. 1, 3, cap. 32. † Orat. prima in Julian. 356.

communicamus, elueret ec perpurgaret: And profaned his hands, to wit, that he might cleanse and purge them of that most pure and unbloody sacrifice of the altar, by which we are made partakers of the passion and divinity of our Saviour, &c.

After this, he made an edict for the spoiling and profaning of all church-stuff, money, sacred ornaments, and holy vestments, that were to be had, for defiling of altars, for dishonouring priests, deacons, and virgins; but principally for breaking down of martyrs sepulchres, and for destroying their churches. In respect whereof, this holy father writes to him thus:*

‘Thou persecutor after Herod; thou traitor after Judas; ‘thou murderer of Christ after Pilate; thou enemy of God ‘after the Jews; dost thou not reverence these holy sacrifices slain for *CHRIST*? dost thou not fear those noble ‘champions, John, Peter, Paul, and others, that passed ‘through fire, sword, beasts, tyrants, and what other cruelties soever, might be denounced against, them, with a ‘cheerful heart? dost thou not fear them, to ‘whom now are assigned so great honours, and ‘to whom festival days are ordained upon earth? ‘by whom devils are driven away, and diseases ‘cured? and whose very bodies are able to do ‘the same miracles now, which their holy souls ‘did when they were upon earth? their bodies, I say, ‘when they are handled by us, and honoured; yea, the only ‘apparition, and predictions, the only drops of blood of ‘these bodies do as great miracles as the bodies themselves. ‘These bodies therefore dost thou not honour? &c.’ Thus far St. Gregory Nazianzen.

The wicked edict of Julian.

The great honours done to martyrs in old time.

After the death of wicked Julian, although sometimes, good emperors were sent by God yet they remained not long, but the Arian heretics came into government again, and so did bear the sway for divers ages after, afflicting and persecuting the Catholics, as may appear by all the ecclesiastical writers that are extant of that time. The better to conjecture what was done and suffered in the world, I wish, Christian reader, you would view that which remains written of one part only, and that for the space of few years: I mean, of the perse-

The Arian persecution.

* Orat. in Jul. p. 359.

cution of the Arian-Vandals in Africa, which began not long before St. Augustine's death, and lasted divers years after, and is recorded in three several books by the holy man Victor, bishop of Utica, that was one of the sufferers. The history is strange and worth reading, for it has very many things which set forth the perfect form of times that have followed since, and yet continue.

St. Augustine's grief and sorrow for the Vandal persecution. Possidius that lived with St. Augustine, and after writ a history of his life, reports in the same, that when the holy man saw but the beginnings of this persecution, he was wonderfully afflicted with compassion in his mind. 'For,' says he, he saw now already Catholic churches ' destitute of their priests; sacred virgins and ' others that lived continent, to be dissipated and cast out; ' the hymns and praises of God to have ceased in most ' churches; churches burnt; the solemn service due to ' Almighty God, no more used in the proper places; the ' divine sacrifices and sacraments either not to be sought ' for any longer, or else the priests were not easily found ' to minister the same to such as sought them.' Hitherto are the words of Possidius.

But St. Victor, speaking of the said persecution more in particular, shows, that although they were cruel against all Catholics in general, yet he says* *Præcique in Ecclesiis, Basilicisque & Cæmeteriis & Monasteriis sceleratius sæviebant.* They principally did exercise their wicked cruelty upon churches, oratories, church-yards, and monasteries. And then he goes forward, showing their further cruelties and outrages in abusing priests and monks, and in spoiling altars, of which he says in particular, *De pallis altaris, prob nefas, camisias sibi & femoralio faciebant.* Of the cloths of the altar (O! wickedness) they made themselves shirts and breeches. He adds moreover, that gathering divers sacred virgins together, against all shame, they would behold and handle them immediately; whom afterwards, because they would not be lewd with them, they tormented with fire, and threw into rivers with stones tied to their feet, saying to them,† tell us how do your bishops and clergymen use to act with you? besides all this, he says that they prohibited Catholics, *Missas agere vel tractare*

* Vict. l. 1. de per V. & ibid † Note these things, and confer them with our times. ‡ Ibid L. 2. initio.

to say mass. They forbid them also to bury Christians solemnly, with light, tapers, and torches; and finally, they forbade them all exercise of their Catholic Christian religion. And because in these things they were not obeyed as they desired, but were resisted openly and manfully by them that had spirit and courage from God to do it, therefore they did rage and fret above measure, and did exercise more extremity in all spiteful and villainous kind of cruelties, than did the pagan persecutors, either before or after. And this was the spirit of those ancient heretics.

Now then to make our stay here, and to pass no further in this discourse, thou seest, dear brother, in these beginnings of God's church for five hundred years together after Christ's departure, how often our blessed Saviour permitted his dearest servants to be persecuted for their trial and merit. In which matter notwithstanding, is diligently to be considered: First, the greatness and sharpness of this trial, to the end we may not be disheartened, when the like, more or less, falls to our lot. Secondly, how miserable the fall of divers were in this trial, to the loss of their souls and eternal desolation. Thirdly, how the causes of this their fall, were either pride and temerity, whereby they tempted God; or else the love of this present world, whereby they were allured to forsake their Lord and Master. Fourthly, how glorious was the victory of those that were resolute, and how everlasting their reward, both in this world, and the world to come.

The conclusion of this chapter.

Four things to be considered.

Besides this, it will not be amiss for thee to consider, and that for thy particular comfort, if thou art a Catholic, how careful these holy martyrs were, that suffered in the primitive church, to keep themselves within the unity of Catholic faith and doctrine, delivered and continued universally by tradition, in all churches from age to age, to the end their sufferings and labours might receive their merit: how diligent also they were in advertising others of this important point, assuring them, that without this, their labours could be of no profit to them. And as it is most evident and certain that all these blessed martyrs and saints, whom I have named before, together with their brethren, did continue by succession for five hundred years

A comfortable consideration for a Catholic that suffers.

together, in the common faith of Christendom, called, at that time, Catholic; and did defend the same, both by words, writing, and suffering, against all apostates, heretics, schismatics, or other enemies whatsoever: so it is evident and apparent to the world, that the same universal and general church, faith, and doctrine, which these men left, has continued ever since to this day, and will do to the world's end, fighting and striving against all upstart enemies of the same tradition of Christian religion which those men so carefully commended to us.

By all which, as also by the manner of persecution that was then, and by the things themselves which they suffered at heretic hands in these old times, every Catholic, that by God's special grace is made worthy to suffer the like in these our days, may take singular comfort and great instruction therein; considering *nubem testium*, as St. Paul calls it, *Heb.* 12. that is, the great multitude, and cloud of examples and witnesses that have gone before us, to instruct and animate us in this battle. And the holy apostle used the word cloud, to allude by a metaphor to the cloud which our Saviour sent to the people of Israel, *Exod.* xiii. to direct their journey in the desert; insinuating hereby, that these excellent examples of holy martyrs and confessors, whom I have said before to have suffered so valiantly in the primitive church, ought to be to us a most certain direction both for courage, constancy, wisdom, alacrity, and resolution in the spiritual sight; assuring ourselves, that following their steps, in fighting for the like cause, against the like enemies, with like fortitude and humility, and in like patience and longanimity, as they did, we shall not want the like grace, like comfort, like assistance, like merit, and like reward.

*An illa-
tion upon
the pre-
misses.*

CHAPTER VI.

The fifth impediment of Resolution, in the service of Almighty God: proceeding from over-much presumption in the mercies of our Saviour, without remembrance of his justice.

SECT. I. *That God is merciful and just.*

As many allege for their excuse, against the resolution which we persuade, the false reasons which we have already confuted: so is there another sort of people that take a contrary course, and far shorter way, to elude all that can be said to move them to resolution, quite opposite to them, whom I answered in the first chapter* of this second part: And this way is, to abuse the goodness of our Saviour Christ himself, answering to whatsoever you can say against them, with this only sentence; God is merciful. Of which men our Saviour complains grievously by the prophet, when he says, *Psal. cxxviii. Supra dorsum meum fabricaverunt peccatores, prolongaverunt iniquitatum suam*: sinners have built upon my back, they have prolonged their iniquity. By which words he signifies, that prolonging of our iniquities, in hopes of God's mercy, is to build our sins on his back and shoulders. But what follows? will God bear this injury? no verily: for the next ensuing words are, *Dominus justus concidit cervices peccatorum*: God is just and he will cut asunder the necks, or pride, of sinners: to wit, those sinners that, upon this vain presumption of God's mercy and indulgence, do prolong their evil life, and by that means build on the back of our Saviour. And the reason is, because nothing can be more injurious to God's divine majesty, than to make him the foundation of our sinful life, or continuance therein, who lost his own life for the extinguishing of sin in us, as St. Paul declares at large.

*Building
on God's
back.*

But you will say, perhaps, and is not God then merciful? Yes truly, dear brother he is most merciful; and there is neither end nor measure of his mercy; he is even mercy itself: it is his nature and essence, and he can no more cease to be merci-

*How God
is both
merciful
and just.*

* Of fear and mistrust of God's mercy.

ful, than he can cease to be God. But yet, as the prophet says, he is also just. We must not so remember his mercy, as to forget his justice. *Dulcis et rectus est Dominus*: our Lord is sweet, but yet upright and just also, says holy David, *Psal.* xxiv. And in the same place, *All the ways of our Lord are mercy and truth*. Which words St. Bernard expounding in a certain sermon of his,* says thus:

‘There are two feet of our Lord, whereby he walks in his ways; that is, mercy and truth: and God fastens both these feet upon the hearts of them who turn to him. And every sinner, that will truly convert himself, must lay hand-fast on both these feet. For if he should lay hand on mercy only not heeding truth and justice, he would perish by presumption. And, on the other side, if he should apprehend justice only without mercy, he would perish by despair. To the end therefore that he may be saved, he must humbly fall down, and kiss both these feet: that in respect of God’s justice, he may retain fear, and in respect of his mercy, he may conceive hope.’ And in another place,† ‘Happy is that soul upon which our Lord *JESUS CHRIST* has placed both his feet. I will not sing to thee judgment alone, nor yet mercy alone, my God, but I will sing to thee with the prophet David, mercy and judgment joined together. And I will never forget those two justifications of thine, by which we must be saved.’

St. Augustine handles this point most excellently in divers of his works: ‘Let them mark, says he,‡ who so much love mercy and gentleness in our Lord; let them mark, I say, and fear also his truth. For as the prophet says, God is both sweet and just, dost thou love because he is sweet? fear also because he is just. As a sweet Lord, he said, *Psal.* xxiv. ‘I have held my peace at your sins.’ But as a just Lord, he adds, *Psal.* cii. ‘And think you that I will hold my peace still?’ God is merciful and full of mercies, say you. It is most certain, yea add to this, that he bears a long while. But yet fear that which comes in the end of the same verse, *Et verax*: that is, he is also true and just. There are two things

* Serm. 52. parvorum. * Serm. 6. in Cant.

† August. Tract. 53. in Joan.

' whereby sinners stand in danger ; the one in hoping too
 ' much, which is presumption ; the other, in hop-
 ' ing too little, which is despair. Who is de- *Two dan-*
 ' ceived by hoping too much ? he who says to *gers of*
 ' himself, God is a good God, a merciful God, *sinner.*
 ' and therefore, I will do what pleases me. And why so ?
 ' because God is a merciful God : a gentle God. These
 ' men run into danger by hoping too much. Who are in
 ' danger by despair ? they who seeing their sins grievous,
 ' and thinking them impossible to be pardoned, say within
 ' themselves, well we are sure to be damned, why then do
 ' we not whatsoever pleases us best in this life ? these
 ' men are murdered by despair, the others by hope. What
 ' therefore does God to gain both these sorts of men ? to
 ' him who is in danger by hope, he says, *Eccles. v.* ' Do
 ' not say to thyself, the mercy of God is great, he will be
 ' merciful to the multitude of my sins ; for his wrath works
 ' upon sinners. ' To him who is in danger by despair, he
 ' says, *Ezek. xviii.* ' That at what time soever a sinner
 ' shall convert himself, he will forget his iniquities. Thus
 far St. Augustine, besides much more which he adds in
 the same place, touching the great peril and folly of those
 men, who, upon vain hopes of God's mercy, to persevere
 in their evil life.

It is truly, dear brother, a very bad conse- *A bad*
 quence, and a most unjust kind of reasoning, to *manner*
 say, that because Almighty God is merciful, and *of rea-*
 patient, therefore I will abuse his mercy, and *soning.*
 continue in my wickedness. The scripture teaches us not
 to reason so, but rather quite contrary. God is merciful,
 and expects my conversion : and the longer he expects,
 the more grievous will be his punishment when he comes,
 if I neglect his patience ; and therefore I ought presently
 to accept of his mercy. Thus St. Paul reasons, who says,
Rom. ii. ' Dost thou condemn the riches of his goodness,
 and patience, and longanimity, not knowing that the longani-
 mity of God brings thee to penance ? But according to thy
 hardness and impenitent heart, thou heapest to thyself wrath
 in the day of wrath, and of the revelation of the just judg-
 ment of God.' In which words St. Paul signifies, that the
 longer God suffers us with patience in our wickedness, the
 greater heap of vengeance does he gather against us, if we
 persist obstinate in the same. Whereunto St. Augustine

adds* another consideration of great dread and fear, and that is, 'If he offers thee grace, says *Note this.* ' he, to-day, thou knowest not whether he will ' do the same to-morrow. If he gives thee life and memory this week, thou knowest little whether thou shalt enjoy that benefit the next.'

*God's
goodness
nothing
helps those
that perse-
vere in sin.*

The holy prophet beginning his seventy-second Psalm, of the dangerous prosperity of worldly men, uses these words of admiration; How good a God is the God of Israel, to them that are of a right heart! and yet in all that Psalm he does nothing else but show the heavy justice of God towards the wicked, even when he gives them most prosperities and worldly wealth; and his conclusion is: For behold they that make themselves far from thee shall perish; thou hast destroyed all that fornicate from thee. By which is signified, that how good soever God be to the just, yet that is nothing to the relief of the wicked, who are to receive just vengeance at his hands, amidst the great mercies bestowed upon the Godly. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the just*, says the same prophet, *Psalm xxxiii. and his ears unto their prayers; but the countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil things, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

It was an old practice of deceiving prophets, resisted strongly by the true prophets of God, to cry *Peace, Peace*, to wicked men, when indeed there was nothing towards them, but danger, sword and destruction; according as the said true prophets foretold,† and as the event proved. Wherefore the prophet David gives us a noble and sure rule, to govern our hope and confidence withal, when he says, *Psalm iv. Sacrificate sacrificium Justitiæ, & sperate in Domino*: Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord. Wherewith St. John agrees, when he says, *1 John iii. If our heart do not reprehend us* (for a wicked life) *we have confidence towards God*; as though he should say, If our conscience, be guilty of a lewd and wicked life, and we resolve to dwell and continue therein, then in vain have we confidence in the mercies of God, to whose just judgment we stand subject for our wickedness.

* Aug. tract 53, in Joan.

† Jer. vi. & Ezek. xiii.

It is most wonderful, and dreadful, to consider, how Almighty God has acted with his best beloved in this world, upon offence given by occasion of sin; how easily he has changed countenance; how soon he has broken off friendship as it were; how straightly he has taken account, and how severely he has punished. The angels that he created with so great care and love, and to whom he imparted so singular privileges of all kind of perfections, that he made them in a certain manner, almost Gods, committed but one sin of pride against his majesty, and that only in thought, as divines hold; and yet presently, all that good-will and favour was changed into justice, and that so severe that they were thrown down to eternal torments without redemption, for to abide the rigour of hell-fire, and intolerable darkness, as the holy apostles SS. Peter and Jude do affirm.*

The severity of God's punishment upon sin.

The angels.

After this Almighty God made himself another new friend of flesh and blood, who was our father Adam in Paradise, where God conversed with him, most friendly and familiarly. He called him, he walked and talked with him, he gave him the dominion of the world, made him his substitute, made all creatures in the world subject to him, he brought them all before him to the end he should give them their names; he made a mate and companion for him, he blessed them both; and finally showed all possible tokens of love. But what followed? Adam committed but one sin, and that at the enticement of another; and that also a sin of small importance, as it may seem to man's reason, being but the eating of a forbidden apple; and yet it was no sooner done, but all friendship was broken between God and him; he was thrust out of Paradise, condemned to perpetual misery, and all his posterity to eternal damnation, together with himself, if he had not repented. And how severely this grievous sentence was executed afterwards may appear by the numberless millions that went to hell for this sin, for the space of four thousand years that passed before it was ransomed: which finally could not be done, but by the coming down of God's own son, the second person of the blessed Trinity, his taking flesh, and by his intolerable sufferings and death in the same.

Adam and Eve.

Great severity.

* 2 Pet. 3, Ep. 2 Jude.

Moses and
Aaron.

The two miracles of the world, Moses and Aaron were of singular authority and favor with God; insomuch that they could obtain any thing at his hands for other men. And yet when they offended God once themselves at the waters of contradiction in the desert of sin, because they doubted somewhat of the miracle promised them by Almighty God, and thereby did dishonour his majesty before the people, as he says, *Numb. xx.* they were presently rebuked sharply for the same. And although they repented heartily for that offence, and so obtained remission of the fault of guilt; yet there was laid upon them a grievous punishment for the same, that they themselves should not enter into the land of promise, but should die when they came within the sight thereof. And although they entreated God most earnestly for the release of this penance; yet they could never obtain the same at his hands, but he always answered them: seeing you have dishonoured me before the people, you shall die for it, and shall not enter into the land of promise.

Saul.

In what special great favour was Saul with God, when he chose him to be the first king of his people? when he made Samuel the prophet honour him so much, and to anoint him prince upon God's own inheritance, as he calls it? *Reg. x.* when he commended him so much, and took such tender care over him? and yet afterward, because he broke God's commandment, in reserving certain spoils of war, which he should have destroyed, though he reserved them to honour God withal, as he pretended, yet he was presently cast off by God, degraded of his dignity, given over to the hands of an evil spirit, brought to innumerable miseries, and finally, so forsaken and abandoned by God, that he slew himself? his sons were crucified on a cross by his enemies, and all his family and lineage extinguished for ever.

David.

King David, taken in his place, was the chosen and dear friend of God, and honoured with the title of *One that was according to God's own heart*: but yet, as soon as he sinned, the prophet Nathan was sent to denounce God's heavy displeasure and punishment upon him and his, which afterwards ensued during his whole life notwithstanding the great and voluntary penance, that himself added for the pacifying of God's wrath, by fasting, prayer, weeping, wearing of sackcloth, eating of ashes,

and the like, ; whereby is evident, that how great soever God's favour is to any man, yet he cannot avoid his justice, if he offend him.

The holy scripture has infinite examples of this matter ; as the rejection of Cain and his posterity, *Gen. iv.* straight upon his murder. The drowning of the whole world *Gen. viii.* in the time of Noah. The dreadful consuming of Sodom and Gomorra, *Gen. xix.* with the cities about them, by fire and brimstone. The sending down alive to hell, Chore Dathan, and Abiron, *Numb. xvi.* with the slaughter of two hundred and fifty, their adherents, for rebellion against Moses and Aaron, and fourteen thousand seven hundred soon after. The sudden killing of Nadab and Abiu, sons of Aaron, and chosen priests, *Lev. x.* for once offering on the altar other fire than was appointed them. The most terrible striking dead of Ananias and Saphira, *Acts ix.* for retaining some part of their own goods by deceit, from the apostles : with many more such examples which holy writ does recount.

And as for the grievousness of God's justice and heaviness of his hand, when it lights upon us, though it may appear sufficiently by all these examples before alleged (wherein the particular punishments, as you see, are most grievous) yet I will repeat one act more of Almighty God out of scripture, which expresses the same in a wonderful manner. It is well known that Benjamin, among all the twelve sons of Jacob, was the dearest to his father, as appears in the book of Genesis, *Gen. xlii. xliii.* and therefore also greatly respected by God, and his tribe placed in the best part of all the land of promise upon the division thereof, *Josh. xviii.* having Jerusalem, Jericho, and other the best cities within it, notwithstanding for one only sin committed by certain private men in the city of Gabaa, upon the wife of a Levite, God punished the whole tribe in this order, as holy scripture recounts. *Jud. xix.* He caused all the other tribes to rise against them, and first, to come to the house of God in Silo, to ask his advice, and to follow his direction in this war against their brethren. And thence having by God's appointment given battle twice to the tribe of Benjamin, the third day God gave them so great a victory that they slew all the living creatures within the compass of that tribe, except only six hundred men, that

The heaviness of God's hand.

made their escape into the desert : the rest were slain, both man, woman, children and infants, together with all the beasts and cattle ; and all the cities, villages, and houses burnt. And all this, for the sin some of them had committed.

Who then, dear Christian, will not confess with Moses, *Deut. x.* that *God is a great God, and terrible who accepteth no person ?* Who will not confess with St. Paul, *Heb. x.* that *It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ?* Who will not say with holy David, *Psalms cxviii.* *A judiciis tuis timui ?* I have feared at the remembrance of thy judgments ? If God would destroy a whole tribe for one offence only ; if he would not pardon Chore, Lathan, and Abiron ; the sons of Aaron ; Ananias and Saphira ; if he would not forgive Saphira ; if he would not forgive Esau, though he demanded it with tears, as St. Paul says ; *Heb. xii.* if he would not remit the punishment of one fault to Moses and Aaron, although they asked it with great instance ; if he would not forgive one proud thought to the angels, nor the eating of an apple to Adam, without infinite punishment ; nor would pass over the cup of affliction from his own dear Son, *Matt. xxvi.* though he asked the same thrice upon his knees, what reason hast thou, brother, to think that he will let pass so many sins of thine unpunished ? what cause hast thou to imagine, that he will deal extraordinarily with thee, and break the course of his justice for thy sake ? art thou better than those whom I have named ? or hast thou any privilege from his majesty above them ? or is he another God now than he was then.

*Great and
strange ef-
fects of
God's jus-
tice.*

If thou wouldst consider the great and strange effects of his justice, which we see daily executed in the world, thou wouldst have little cause to flatter thyself so dangerously as thou dost. We see, notwithstanding God's mercy, yea, after the death and passion of Christ our Saviour for the salvation of the whole world ; yet so many millions are damned daily by the justice of Almighty God ; so many Infidels, Heathens, Jews, and Turks, that remain in the darkness of their own ignorance ; and among Christians, so many heretics, and misbelievers ; among Catholics, so many evil livers, that Christ truly said, *Matt. xx.* that they were few that

should be saved. Although his death was a ransom for all, if by their own wickedness they made themselves not unworthy thereof. And we see, that before the coming of our Saviour, all the world was much more in a way to damnation for many years together, excepting a few Jews who were the people of God. And yet among them also, the greater part were not saved, as may be conjectured by the speeches of the prophets from time to time; and especially by the sayings of Christ to the pharisees and other rulers of the nation. Now then, if God, to satisfy his justice, would let so many millions perish in punishment of their sins as he also now daily permits, without any prejudice or impeachment to his infinite mercy: why may he not also damn thee for thy sins, notwithstanding his mercy, seeing thou not only dost commit them without fear, but also dost obstinately persist in the same upon presumption of his mercy.

SECT. II.—*Whether God's Mercy be greater than his Justice.*

BUT here, perhaps, some one may say, if God is so severe in punishing every sin, and if he damns so many thousands for one that he saves, how is that true which holy writ so often repeats, that the mercies of God are above all his other works, and are exalted above his judgments? for if the number of the damned be so great, and so much exceeds the number of those who are saved, it seems that the work of justice surpasses the work of mercy. To which I answer, first, that as for the small number of them that are saved, and enter in at the narrow gate* as also for the great number of such as are damned by running the common path of perdition in this world, we can in no wise doubt of it. For besides all other proofs thereof, Christ himself, that stands instead of all, has made the matter certain, and out of question, by his asseveration thereof, more than once in the gospel. We are therefore to see, how, notwithstanding all this, the mercy of God does exceed his other works.

* Matt. xvii. & xx.

The first way how God's mercy is above his justice.

And first, his mercy may be said to exceed, for our salvation is solely of his mercy, and our damnation from ourselves only, as from the first and principal cause thereof; according to the saying of God by the prophet, *Hosea xiii. Perditio tua ex te, Israel, tantum modo in me auxilium tuum.*

Thy perdition is only from thyself, O Israel, and all the assistance thou hast to do good, is only of me. So that as we must acknowledge God's grace and mercy for the author of every good thought and act we do, and consequently ascribe all our salvation to him, who prevents, moves and assists our free-will with his grace: so none of our evil acts, for which we are damned, do proceed from him, but only from ourselves; and so he is no cause at all of our damnation, as he is of our salvation: and in this his mercy exceeds his justice. Because he crowns in us his own works, though now made our's by the privilege of his grace, but damns in us only our own misdeeds.

The second way.

Secondly, his mercy, exceeds his justice, in respect of his will and desire; for he desires all men to be saved, as St. Paul teaches; *1 Tim. ii.* and himself protests when he says, *Ezek. xii. I will not the death of him that dies—return ye and live.* And again, by the same prophet he complains grievously, that men will not accept of his mercy which he offers *Ezek. xxxiii. I will not the death of the impious, but that the impious convert from his way and live. Convert, convert ye from your most evil ways: and why will you die, O house of Israel?* by which appears that he offers his mercy most willingly and freely to all, but uses his justice only upon necessity, and as it were constrained thereunto by our obstinate behaviour. This our Saviour Christ signifies more plainly and pathetically, when with tears he says to Jerusalem, *Matt. xxiii. O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen gathereth her chickens, under her wings, and thou wouldst not? behold your house shall be left to you desolate.* Here you see the mercy of God offered to the Jews; but seeing they refused it he was forced as it were, to pronounce this heavy sentence of destruction and desolation upon them; which he fulfilled within forty or fifty years after, by the hands of Titus and Vespasian, emperors of Rome, who ut-

terly overthrew the city of Jerusalem, and the whole nation of Jews,* whom we see dispersed over all the world at this day, in bondage both of body and soul. Which work of God's justice, though it is most terrible, yet was his mercy greater to them, in that he sought by so many means to prevent and save them, if they had not rejected the same mercy so obstinately as they did.

Thirdly, his mercy exceeds his justice, even towards the damned and reprobate themselves in this life at least; for that he uses numberless means to lead them to their salvation, as namely, by giving them free-will, and assisting the same with his grace to do good, as has been said; by moving them inwardly with many good inspirations, by alluring them inwardly with exhortations, promises, examples of others; as also by sickness, adversities, and other gentle corrections: by giving them time to repent, with occasions, opportunities, and enticements to the same; and by threatening them with eternal death, if they repent not. All which things being effects of mercy, and goodness towards them; they must needs confess in their greatest fury of despair and torments, and although the execution of his justice and judgments is most terrible and dreadful, when they fall upon them; yet are they righteous and justified in themselves, and no ways to be compared with the excessive greatness of his mercies used towards them in this life.

The third way.

Out of this then we learn also that to be true, which the prophet says; to wit: *Psal. xxxii. God loveth mercy and judgment.* And again: *Psal. lxxxiv. Mercy and truth have met each other. Justice and peace have kissed, &c.* We see the reason in like manner, why the same prophet protested of himself: *Psal. cviii. Mercy and judgment, O Lord, I will sing to thee*: not mercy alone, nor judgment alone, but *mercy and judgment*; that is, I will not presume upon thy mercy, so as not to fear thy judgment, nor yet will I fear thy judgment, as ever to despair of thy mercy. The fear of God's judgments must always be joined with our confidence in God's mercy. But what fear? that fear truly, which the scripture describes, when it says,† *The fear of our Lord expels sin. The fear of God hates all evil. He*

Fear to be joined with hope

* Joseph. de bello, Jud. l. 7. c. 15, 16 17. † Psal. 33. Eccl. 1, Eccl. 7, and 15.

that fears God neglects nothing. He that fears God will turn and look into his own heart. He will not be incredulous to that which he says; but will keep his ways, and seek out the things that are pleasant to him. They will prepare their heart, and sanctify their soul in his sight.

This is the description of the true fear of God *The praise of true fear.* set down by the Holy Ghost himself. This is the description of that fear, which is so much commended and commanded in every part and parcel of God's word: of that fear, I say, which is called the fountain of life, the root of prudence, the crown and fulness of wisdom, the glory and gloriation of a Christian, a happy gift.* Of him that has this fear the scripture says: *Psal. cxi. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments.* And again: *Eccl. i. With him that feareth the Lord, it shall be in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed.* Finally, of such as have this fear, the scripture says, that God is their foundation God has prepared a great multitude of sweetness for them: God has prepared them an inheritance: God is as merciful to them, as the father is merciful to his children. And to conclude, *Psal. cxliv. He will do the will of them that fear him: and will hear their prayer and save them.*

This holy fear had holy Job, when he said to God, *Job. ix. I feared all my works.* And he yields the reason thereof. *Knowing that thou didst not spare the offender,* This fear the other wanted, of whom the prophet says, *Psal. ix. For he hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten, he hath turned away his face not to see to the end—Wherefore hath the wicked provoked God, for he hath said in his heart, he will not require it.* It is a great exasperation of God against us, to take the one half of God's nature from him, which is, to make him merciful without justice; and to live so, as if God would take no account of our life; whereas he has protested most earnestly the contrary: saying, That he is a hard and covetous man, who will not be content to receive his own again, but also will have usury for the loan; that he will have a strict reckoning of all the goods lent us; that he will have fruit for all

* Prov. 14. Eccl 1 & 5.

the labours he has bestowed upon us, and finally, that he will have an account of every word that we have spoken.

Our Saviour Christ, in the threescore and eighth Psalm which, in sundry places of the gospel, he interprets to be written of himself, among other dreadful curses, which he sets down against the reprobate, has these: *Let their eyes be darkened that they see not; and their back bend thou down always. Pour out thy indignation upon them: and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Add thou iniquity upon their iniquity: and let them not come into thy justice. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; and with the just let them not be written.* Here we see the greatest curse which God can lay upon us, next to blotting out of the book of life, is to suffer us to be so blinded, as to add iniquity upon iniquity, and not to enter into consideration of his justice. For which cause also, this confident kind of sinning upon hope of God's mercy, is accounted by divines* for the first of the six grievous sins against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour in the gospel signifies, to be so hardly pardoned by his Father. And the reason why they call this a sin against the Holy Ghost, is, because it wilfully rejects one of the principal means left by the Holy Ghost, to retrieve us from sin, which is the fear and respect of the justice of God upon sinners.

Why presumption is a sin against the Holy Ghost.

Wherefore to conclude this matter, methinks, we may apply the same argument touching the fear of God's justice, which St. Paul uses to inculcate to the Romans, the fear of God's ministers, temporal princes, *Rules are not a terror*, says he, *Rom. xiii.* 'to the good work, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same—but if thou do that which is evil, fear, for he beareth not the sword in vain.' In like manner we may say to those, who make God so merciful, that no man ought to fear his justice. Would ye not fear, my brethren, the justice of God in punishment? live virtuously, and you shall be as void of fear as lions are, according to the saying of the wise man. Perfect charity,

The danger of not fearing.

* D Thom. 2, 2, q. 14 art. 1, 2, 3,

says also St. John Evangelist, 1 *John* iv. *casteth out fear*. But if you live wickedly, then you have cause to fear, for God called not himself a judge for nothing.

If the matter was so secure, as many men fondly persuade themselves it is, St. Peter would never have said to Christians newly baptized: *Pet. i. Converse in fear during the time of your sojourning here*. Nor St. Paul to the same men: *Phil. ii. Work your salvation with fear and trembling*. But here, perhaps, some men will ask me, how then does the same apostle in another place say, 2 *Tim. i. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love, and sobriety*. To which I answer, that our spirit is not a spirit of servile fear, that is, to live in fear

Servile fear, and the fear of children different. only for dread of punishment, without love; but it is a spirit of love; joined with such a fear as children have of offending their father, not only in respect of his punishment, but principally for his goodness towards them, and benefits bestowed upon them.

This St. Paul declared plainly to the Romans, showing the difference between servile fear, and the fear of children; *Rom. viii. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again, says he, in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, (Father.)* He says here to the Romans, you have not received again the spirit of servitude in fear, because their former spirit, whilst they were Gentiles, was only in servile fear, for they honoured and adored their idols, not for any love they bore them, being so numerous as they were, and such notable lewdness reported of them (I mean of Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and the like) but only for fear of hurt from them, if they did not serve, adore and honour them.

St. Peter also, in one sentence, expounds all this matter. For having said, 1 *Pet. iii. And be not afraid of their terror, and be not troubled*, (meaning of the servile fear of wicked men,) he adds presently: But sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts; But with modesty and fear, having a good conscience; so that the spirit of servile fear, which is grounded only upon regard of punishment, is forbidden us to rest in: but the loving fear of children, is commanded. And there are two things also to be noted about this.

The first, that although we are forbid to dwell upon the spirit of servile fear, of punishment and chastisement, especially when we are now entered into the service of God, yet it is most profitable for sinners, and for such as yet do but begin to serve God, because it moves them to repentance, and to look about them. For which cause it is called by the wise man, *Prov. i. The beginning of wisdom*. And therefore Jonas in regard to the Ninivites, and St. John in regard to the Jews, and all the prophets in regard to sinners, endeavoured to stir up this fear, by threatening the dangers and punishments which were imminent upon them if they repented not. But yet afterwards when men are converted to God, and do go forward in his service; they change every day this servile fear into love, until they arrive at last to that state, whereof St. John says, *1 John iv. That perfect love or charity casteth out fear*. Whereunto St. Augustine says: that fear is the servant, sent before to prepare a place in our hearts for the mistress which is charity. Which being once entered in, and perfectly placed, fear goes out again and gives place to the same. But where this fear never enters at all, there it is impossible for charity ever to come and dwell, says this holy father.

The second thing to be noted is, that although this fear of punishment is not in very perfect men, or at least, is less in them than in others, as St. John in the place before alleged, teaches, yet being joined with love and reverence, as it ought to be, it is most profitable and necessary for all Christians, whose life is not so perfect, nor charity so great, as to have that perfection, whereof St. John speaks, when he says, *That perfect charity casteth out fear*. This appears also by our Saviour Christ's persuading this fear of punishment even to his apostles, saying, *Matt. x. Fear you him who after he has killed, has power to cast into hell, yea, I say to you, fear him*. The same St. Paul teaches the Corinthians, who were good Christians, laying down first the justice of God, and thereupon persuading them to fear. *2 Cor. v.* 'For we must all appear, says he, before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil. Knowing therefore the fear

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fear neces-
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ginners.*

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of the Lord, we persuade men,' Nay, which is more, St. Paul testifies, that notwithstanding all his favours received from God, yet he retained this fear of God's justice, as appear by these words of his: 1 *Cor.* ix. 'I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, least perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate.

The conclusion.

Now then, if St. Paul stood in awe of the justice of God, notwithstanding he was conscious to himself of no sin or offence, as he protests : what

oughtest thou to be, whose conscience remains guilty of so many misdeeds and wickednesses ? Know you, says St. Paul, *Ephes.* v. ' that no fornicator, nor unclean, nor covetous person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of CHRIST.' And immediately after, as though this had not been sufficient, he adds, to prevent the folly of sinners who

flatter themselves. ' Let no man deceive you with

St Paul's
*wholesome
exhortation.*

vain words : for, because of these things cometh the anger of God, upon the children of unbelief.

Be ye not therefore partakers of them.' As if he should say, they that flatter you, and say, God is merciful, and will pardon easily all these and the like sins : these men deceive you, for the wrath and vengeance of God lights upon the children of unbelief, for these matters, that is, it lights upon those who will not believe God's justice, nor his threats against sin, but rashly presuming in his mercy, do persevere in sin, till on the sudden God's wrath does rush upon them, and then it is too late to amend. Wherefore, says he, if you be wise, be not partakers of their folly, but fear God's justice, and amend your lives presently, while you have time. And this admonition of St. Paul shall be sufficient to conclude against all those that refuse or defer their resolution of amendment, upon vain hopes of God's pardon or toleration in their sins and wicked life.

CHAPTER VII.

The sixth thing that hinders men from mature resolution : which is the deceitful hope and persuasion to do it better, or with more ease afterwards.

SECT. I.—*The longer we defer our conversion, the more difficulty we find in it.*

THE reasons and authorities which hitherto have been alleged, might seem, I doubt not, sufficient in the judgment and opinion of any reasonable man, to prove the necessity of the resolution whereof we treat, and to remove all impediments that offer themselves against the same. But yet because, as the wise man says, *Prov. xviii.* ‘He that hath a mind to depart from a friend, seeketh occasion :’ how to do it with some colour and show ; so there are many in the world, who having no other excuse for their breaking and keeping off from God, seek to cover it with this pretence, that they mean by his grace, to amend all in time. And this time is put off from day to day, till Almighty God, in whose hands only the moments of time are, shuts them out of time, and sends them to eternal pains, because they abused the singular benefit of time which he gave them in this world.

*A vain
excuse.*

Let them hear St. Augustine : * ‘ They are oftentimes so prevented by the sudden wrath of Almighty God, that they never receive time to convert themselves, nor pardon for their sins.’ So that this is one of the greatest and most dangerous deceits, and yet the most ordinary and universal that the enemy of mankind uses with the children of Adam. And I dare say boldly, that among Christians, more perish by this deceit, than by all other subtilties which he uses besides. He knows very well the force of this snare above all others, and therefore urges it so much to every man. He considers better than we do the importance of delay in a matter so weighty, as is our conversion and salvation. He is not ignorant how one sin draws on another ;

*Many
causes
why the
devil per-
suades us
to delay.*

* Aug. lib. de fide ad Pet. cap. 3.

how he that is not fit to-day, will be less fit to-morrow how custom grows into nature; how old diseases are hardly cured: how God withdraws his grace: how his justice is ready to punish every sin: and how by delay we exasperate the same; and heap vengeance on our own heads, as St. Paul says, *Rom. xiii.* He is privy to the uncertainty and perils of our life, to the dangerous chances that fall out hourly, to the impediments that will multiply daily, to hinder our conversion more and more: all this our ghostly enemy knows, and considers the same well; and for that cause persuades so many to delay as he does. For not being able any longer to blind the understanding of so many Christians, but that they must needs see clearly the utility and necessity of this resolution and that all the impediments in the world, which divert them from the same, are but trifles and mere deceits; he runs to this only refuge of delay, persuading them to defer a little, and that in time to come, they will have a better occasion, and more opportunity to do it, at leisure, than they have at present.

'This slight St. Augustiue experienced at his conversion as he himself writes.* For he was persuaded that no salvation could be had for him, but by change and amendment of his life: yet the enemy held him for a time in delay, saying to him, Stay a little; defer yet for a time. Thereby, as he says, to bind him faster in the custom of sin, till by the omnipotent power of God's grace, and his own most earnest endeavour, he broke violently from him, crying to God, Why shall I longer say, to-morrow? why shall I not even do it at this instant? and so he did even in his very youth, leading afterwards a most holy and perfect Christian life.

But if we will discover yet further the greatness and peril of this deceit, let us consider the causes that may hinder our resolution and conversion at this present, and we shall see them all increased, and strengthened by delay, and consequently the matter made harder and more difficult for the time to come, than it is now. For first, as I have said, the continuance of sin brings custom; which once having got prescription upon us, is very hard to re-

The causes which make our conversion harder by delay.

* L. 8. Confess. 17, & 14.

move, as by experience we daily find in all habits that have taken root in us. Who can remove for example, without great difficulty, a long custom of drunkenness, swearing, or of any other evil habit, once settled upon him? Secondly, the longer we persist in our sinful life, the more God withdraws his grace and assistance from us; which grace is the only means to make the way of virtue easy to men, and their conversion possible. Thirdly, the power and kingdom of the devil is more established and confirmed in us by continuance, and so the harder to be removed. Fourthly, the liberty of our free-will is more and more weakened and daunted by repetition of sin, though not extinguished. Fifthly, the faculties of our mind are more corrupted, the understanding is more darkened, the will more perverted, the appetite more disordered. Sixthly and lastly, our sensual parts and passions are more stirred up and strengthened against the rule of reason, and by continuance of time harder to be repressed, than they were before.

Put then dear Christian, all this together, and consider indifferently with thyself, whether it is more likely that thou shalt make this resolution hereafter, more easily than now. Hereafter I say, when by longer custom of sin, the evil habit will be more deeply rooted in thee, the devil in more firm possession of thee, God's help further from thee, thy mind more infected, thy judgment more weakened, thy good desires extinguished, thy passions confirmed, thy body corrupted, thy strength diminished, and all the faculties of thy soul more perverted. We see by experience, that a ship which leaks, is more easily emptied at the beginning than afterwards. We see that a ruinous palace, the longer it is without repair, the more charge and labour it will require in repairing. We see that if a man drive in a nail with a hammer, the more blows he gives upon it, the harder it is to pluck it out again. How then thinkest thou to commit sin upon sin, and by perseverance therein, to find the redress more easy hereafter than now?

It is written among the lives of old hermits, that on a time an angel showed to one of them in the wilderness a certain silly fellow that hewed down wood; who having made to himself a great burden to carry thence, laid it on his back and because it was uneasy and pressed him much,

*The same
showed by
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sons.*

*An exam-
ple in
Prato spi-
rituali
Sancto-
rum Pa-
trum.*

he cast it down again, and put a great deal more to it, and then began to lift it anew ; but when he felt it heavier than before, he fell into a great rage, and added twice as much more to it thereby to make it lighter. Whereat when this holy man mused much, the angel told him, that this was a figure of those in the world, who finding it somewhat unpleasant to resist one or two vices at the beginning defer their conversion, and add twenty or forty more to them, thinking to find the matter more easy to be remedied afterwards.

St. Augustine,* expounding the miracle of our Saviour in raising Lazarus, who had been dead four days, as the evangelist says, *John xi.* from death to life, examines the cause why Christ wept, cried out, and troubled himself in spirit, before he did it, whereas he raised others with greater facility. And he concludes the mystery to have been for that Lazarus was now dead four days, and *al-*
degrees of a so buried : which signifies the four degrees of a
sinner. sinner ; the first, in voluntary delectation of sin the second in consent: the third in fulfilling it by work : the fourth in continuance or custom thereof : Wherein whosoever is once buried, says this holy father, he is hardly raised to life again, without a great miracle of God, and many tears of his own part.

The reason The reason hereof, is that which the wise man
of more says, *Eccl. x.* ‘ A long sickness is troublesome to
difficulty ‘ the physician : The physician cutteth off a short
by delay. sickness.’ ‘ His bones shall be filled with the
 ‘ vices of his youth,’ says one of the friends of Job, *Job*
xx. ‘ and they shall sleep with him in the dust.’ What folly then is it, to defer our amendment to our old age, when we shall have more impediments and difficulties, by a great deal, than we have now.

If it seem hard to thee to do penance now, to fast, to pray, and to take upon thee other afflictions, which the Church prescribes to sinners at their conversion ; how wilt thou do it in thy old age, when thy body will have more need of cherishing, than of punishment ? If thou find it unpleasant to resist thy sins now, and to root them out after the continuance of two, three, or four years ; what

* Tract. 49, in Joan.

will it be after twenty years more adjoining to them? how mad a man wouldst thou esteem him, that travelling on the way, and having great choice of lutsy strong horses, should let them go all empty, and lay all the load upon some one poor and lean beast that could scarce uphold himself, and much less sustain so great a burden cast upon him? and surely no less unreasonable is that man, who passing over idly the lusty days and times of his life, reserves all the labour of doing penance for his sins, unto impotent and feeble old age, that cannot sustain itself.

A comparison.

But let the folly of this deceit pass; tell me good Christian, what ingratitude and injustice is this towards Almighty God, having received so many benefits from him already, and expecting so great a reward as is the kingdom of heaven; to appoint notwithstanding the least, and last and worst part of thy life to his service; and that whereof thou art most uncertain, whether it will ever be, or whether God will accept of it when it comes? He is accursed by the prophet, *Mal. i.* who having whole and sound cattle, offers to God the lame, or halting part thereof.

The ingratitude towards God.

How much more shalt thou be accursed, who having so many days of youth, strength, and vigor, dost appoint to God's service, only thy limping old age! In the law it was forbidden, under a most severe threat, *Deut. xxv.* for any man to have two measures in his house for his neighbour, one greater for his friend, and another less for other men? and yet thou art not ashamed to use two measures of thy life, most unequal, in prejudice of thy Lord and God; whereby thou allotest to him a little, short, maimed and uncertain time of old age; and to his enemy, the world, thou assignest the greatest, the fairest, and surest part thereof.

Comparisons.

O dear brother what reason is there why God should thus be used at thy hands? what law of justice or equity is this, that after thou hast served the world, flesh and devil, all thy youth and best days; in the end thou comest to offer thy old decrepit bones defiled and worn out with sin, to thy Creator; his enemies have the best, and he the leavings: his enemies the wine, and he the lees and dregs. Dost thou not remember, that he will have the fat and the best

Unjust dealing with God.

part offered to him? Dost thou not think of the punishment of those who offered the worst part of their substance to God? Follow the counsel then of the Holy Ghost if thou be wise, which warns thee in these words; *Eccles. xii.* ‘Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, and the years draw nigh of which thou shalt say: They please me not.

How many hast thou seen cut off before thy eyes, in the midst of their days, whilst they purposed in time to change their life? how many have come to old age itself, and yet then have felt less will of amendment than before? how many have put it off, even to the very hour of death, and then least of all have remembered their own state, but have died as dumb and senseless as beasts, according to the saying of holy St. Gregory;* ‘The sinner has also this affliction laid upon him, that when he comes to die he forgets himself, who in his lifetime did forget God?’ O how many examples are seen hereof daily? how many worldly men, that have lived in sensibility, how many great sinners that have passed their life in wickedness, do end and die as if they went into some insensible place, where no account, no reckoning will be demanded? They take such care in their last wills of flesh and blood, and the commodities of this world, as if they were still to live, or should have their part of these vanities when they are gone. In truth, to speak as the matter is, they die as if there was no immortality of the soul; and that truly seems to be their inward persuasion, and accordingly, is like to be their portion for all eternity afterwards.

The less of merit. But suppose now that all this was not so, and that a man might as easily, commodiously, and as surely also convert himself in old age, as in youth, and that the matter was in like manner acceptable to God; yet tell me how much time is there lost in this delay? what great treasure of merit which might have been got by labour in God’s service is neglected? If whilst the captain and soldiers did enter into a rich city, to take the spoil, one soldier should say, I will stay, and come the next day, when all the spoil is gone: would not you think him both a coward, and also most unwise? so it is, that Christ our Saviour and all his good sol-

A comparison.

diers took the spoils of this life, enriched themselves with the merit of thy labours ; carried the same with them to heaven and there receive eternal glory for them. And is it not a great folly and perverseness in us, to pass over this life, without the gaining of any merit at all ? now is the time of fight to gain our crown, now is the day of spoil, to seize upon our booty ; now is the market to buy the kingdom of heaven ; now is the time of running to get the prize , now is the day of sowing, to provide corn for the harvest that comes on. If we neglect this time, there is no more crown, no more booty, no more kingdom, no more prize, no more harvest to be looked for. For as the scripture assures us, *Prov. xx.* ‘ Because of the cold the sluggard would not plow ; he shall beg therefore in the summer, and it shall not be given him.’

But if this consideration of gain cannot move thee, Christian reader, as it ought to do, being of such importance as it is, and irrevocable when it was once past ; yet, weigh with thyself, what obligation and charge thou drawest on thee, by every day that thou deferest thy conversion, and livest in sin. Thou makest each day knots, which thou must undo again : thou heapest that together, which thou must disperse again, thou eatest and drinkest that hourly, which thou must vomit up again ; I mean, if the best fall out unto thee : that is, if thou dost repent in time, and God does accept thereof ; for otherwise wo be to thee eternally, for that thou hoarest, as St. Paul says, *Rom. ii.* wrath and vengeance on thy head forever. But supposing that thou receivest grace hereafter to repent, who refuseth it now ; yet, I say, thou must weep one day, because thou laughest now ; thou must be heartily sorry hereafter, for that wherein thou now delightest ; thou hast to bewail the day wherein thou ever gavest consent to sin, or else thy repentance will do thee no good. This thou knowest now beforehand ; and this thou believest now, or else thou art no true Christian. How then art thou so mad as to offend God now, both willingly and deliberately, and to continue therein, knowing that thou must once ask pardon with tears ? If thou thinkest he will pardon thee, what ingratitude is it to offend so good a Lord ? If thou thinkest he will not pardon thee, what folly can be greater than to offend so potent and rigorous a prince without hope of pardon, he being able to punish thee at pleasure ?

The obligation to greater sorrow and satisfaction by delay.

Make thy account now as thou wilt. If thou dost never repent and change thy life, then every sin thou committest, and every day that thou livest therein, is an increase of wrath and vengeance upon thee in hell, as St. Paul proves, *Rom. ii.* If thou dost by God's mercy, for it is now in thy hands, hereafter repent and turn, then must thou one day lament, and bewail, and do penance for this delay which thou makest. Then must thou make satisfaction to God's justice, either in this life, or in the life to come, for that which now thou passest over so pleasantly. And this satisfaction must be so sharp and rigorous (if we believe the ancient fathers,* alleged by me before to this purpose)

Satisfaction for delay.

that it must be answerable to the weight and continuance of thy sins, as more at large I shall have occasion to show again in the second book, talking of satisfaction. So that, by how much the more thou prolongest, and increasest thy sin; so much the greater must be thy pain and sorrow in satisfaction. St. Cyprian says,† A most diligent and long medicine is be used to a deep sore; and the penance must not be less than the fault. So he. And further, he shows in what order this satisfaction must be, to wit: With prayer, with tears, with watching, with lying on the ground, with wearing of haircloth and the like. And conformable to this, St. Augustine teaches:‡ That it is not enough to change our manners, and to leave sin, except we make satisfaction also to God for our sins past, by sorrowful penance, humble sighs, contrition of heart and giving of alms. Our body that has lived in many delights must be afflicted, says St. Hierom,§ our long laughing must be recompensed with long weeping: our soft linen, and fine silk apparel must be changed into sharp haircloth. Finally, St. Ambrose agreeing with the rest says,|| to a great wound, a deep and long medicine is needful. A great offence requires of necessity, a great satisfaction.

Mark here, dear brother, that this satisfaction must be both great and long, and also of necessity. What madness is it then for thee, now to enlarge the wound, knowing that the medicine must afterwards be so painful? what cruelty can be greater against thyself, than to thrust thorns

* Supra, cap. 9. † Cyprian l. de cap. & l. 5. ep. 5. ad Cornel. ‡ Hom. ult. ex. 50, c. 5. § Ep. 5, ad Eustach || Ad Rom. 12. 12.

into thy flesh, which thou must afterwards pull out again, with so many tears ? wouldst thou drink that cup of poisoned liquor, for a little pleasure in the taste, which would soon cast thee after into a burning fever, torment thy bowels, and either take away thy life, or put thee in greater danger thereof ? Is there any madness, any fury or phrensy greater than this.

SECT. II.—*Wherein is treated of the example of the thief pardoned upon the Cross ; and how doubtful the conversion of a sinner is at his death.*

BUT here now I know the refuge will be, to allege the example of the good thief, saved even at the last hour upon the cross, and carried to paradise that same day, with Christ, without any further penance or satisfaction. This example is greatly noted, and urged by all those who defer their conversion ; as no doubt it is, and ought to be, of very great comfort to every man who finds himself now at the last extremity, and therefore commonly tempted by the enemy to despair of God's mercy, which in no case he ought to do. For the same God who saved that great sinner at the last hour, can also, and will, save all those who heartily turn to him, even in the last hour. But alas ! many men do flatter and deceive themselves with misunderstanding, or rather misusing of this example, as they did also in the ancient times.

For we must understand, as St. Augustine well notes, that although many lay hands willingly on this consequence, yet this was but one particular act of Christ, which makes no general rule. *Circumstances of the Fact.* Even as we see that a temporal prince pardons sometimes a malefactor, when he is come to the very place of execution ; yet it would not be well for every malefactor ; or any, to trust to that. For this is but an extraordinary act of the prince's favour, and neither showed nor promised to all men. Besides, this act was a special miracle reserved for the manifestation of Christ's power and glory, at that hour upon the cross. Again, this act was upon a most rare confession made by the thief in that instant ; when all the world forsook Christ, and even the apostles themselves, either doubted, or lost their faith of

his God-head. Besides all this, the confession of this thief was at such a time, that he could neither be baptised nor have further time, for penance, and consequently needed this dispensation. And we do hold also, that even now, at a man's first conversion, there is required no other external penance, or satisfaction at all, but only to believe and to be inwardly sorry for his sins, if he be of years of discretion, and have actual sins, and then to be baptised, and so pass to heaven. But it will not be amiss, perhaps, to allege St. Augustine's own words upon this matter. For thus he writes :

The dis- ' It is almost an irremediable danger when a
course of ' man gives himself over so much to vice, that
St. Augus- ' he forgets that he must give an account thereof
tine upon ' to God. And the reason why I am of this
the thief's ' opinion, is, because it is a great punishment of
conversion. ' sin, to have lost the fear and memory of God's
 ' judgment to come, &c. But dearly beloved,
 ' lest perhaps, the new felicity of the believing thief on the
 ' cross do make any of you too secure and remiss; lest
 ' peradventure, some of you say in his heart, my guilty
 ' conscience shall not trouble nor torment me; my wick-
 ' ed life shall not make me very sad, for I see even in a
 ' moment all sins forgiven the thief: we must consider
 ' first in that thief, not only the shortness of his belief and
 ' confession, but his devotion, and the occasion of that
 ' time, even when the perfection of the just did stagger.
 ' Secondly, show me the faith of that thief in thyself, and
 ' then promise to thyself this felicity. The devil puts in
 ' thy head this security, to the end he bring thee to perdi-
 ' tion: and it is impossible to number all them who have
 ' perished by the shadow of this deceitful hope. He de-
 ' ceives himself, and makes but a jest of his own damna-
 ' tion, who persevering in sin, thinks that God's mercy at
 ' the last day will help or relieve him. It is hateful before
 ' God, when a man, upon confidence of penance in his old
 ' age, sins the more freely. The happy thief whereof we
 ' have spoken, (happy, I say, not because he laid snares in
 ' the way, but because he took hold of the way itself in
 ' CHRIST) laying hands on the prey of life, and after a
 ' strange manner, making a booty of his own death; he, I
 ' say, neither did defer the time of his salvation wittingly

‘ or deceitfully put off the remedy to the last moment of his life, neither did he desperately reserve the hope of his redemption to the hour of his death; neither had he any knowledge of religion, or of CHRIST, before that time. For if he had, perhaps he would not have been the last in number among the apostles, which was the first of all in the kingdom of heaven.’ So he.

*Note this
attentively
reader.*

And by these words of St. Augustine, we are admonished, as you see, that this particular fact of Christ makes no general rule or remission to all men: not because Christ is not always ready to receive the penitent, as he promises, as he was to receive the thief; but because every man has not the time nor grace to repent, as he should at the last hour, according as has been declared before. The general way that God proposes to all, is that which St. Paul says, *2 Cor. xi.* of all men whose end shall be according to their works. Look how they live and so they die. To that effect says the prophet, *Psal. lxi.* *God hath spoken once, these two things have I heard, that power belongeth to God, and mercy to thee, O Lord; for thou wilt render to every man according to his works.* The wise man makes this plain, saying, *Eccl. xxi.* *The way of sinners is made plain with stones, and in their end is hell, and darkness and pains.* Finally, St. Paul makes this general and remarkable conclusion and admonition: *Gal. vi.* ‘ Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption: but he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting.’ In which words he also does not only lay down to us the universal rule, wheréunto we must trust, to wit, that men must expect good for good, evil for evil; but also says further, that to persuade ourselves the contrary thereof, were to mock and abuse both God and ourselves.

The general way.

Notwithstanding, this general law, as I have said, bars not the mercy of Almighty God from using a privilege in regard of some particular men even at the very last. But yet miserable is that soul, which places the anchor of her eternal happiness or misery, upon so uncertain a point as this is. I call it uncertain, because commonly all

*That the
conversion
made at
the last
day is
doubtful
and why.*

divines, who have writ of this matter, speak very doubtfully of the penance or conversion of a man, at the last hour. And although they do not absolutely reject the same, but do leave it, as uncertain to God's secret judgment, yet they incline to the negative part, alleging sundry strong reasons and proofs of the same. And a very learned man of our age, taking upon him to discuss this question, begins his treatise in these words ;* The subject brings with it more fear, than matter of doubt ; as if he would say, that there is little or no doubt at all. Yet he sets down two Catholic conclusions about the matter : the first, That at what time soever a man turns truly to God by penance he will be received, and his sins pardoned ; as is evident by the promise of Almighty God in Ezekiel: *Ezek. xxxiii.* And the wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him, in what day soever he shall turn from his wickedness : his sins shall not hurt him, &c. And further also, that a sinner may at all times during his life, being in his right senses, and having the use of free will assisted by God's grace turn by repentance unto Almighty God.

But yet he sets down a further proposition thus : ' That the penance or turning to God, in *The second conclusion of final conversion.* ' him that defers the same to the last end of his life, is not secure, nor ought to yield much of confidence of pardon ; especially in such as ' have led naughty lives, except a man would feel very ' great and extraordinary compunction at that instant.' The reasons are, because such men having increased God's wrath against them, by their long abusing his patience, when he expected them to penance, as St. Paul says ; do thereby show themselves most unworthy of his grace, which is necessary to their true conversion. Whereupon it follows, that it may justly be doubted, whether this is true or no : to wit, whether it is sorrow for their sins, as they are an offence to God, or whether it is for fear of punishment in the next life, or grief to lose this world, or the like.

And another great divine, who lived above four hundred years, before this, has these words to the same effect. ' It

* Sotus in l. 4. Seat. g. 19, art. 6.

† Hugo de St Victoeri l. 2, de Sac. part 14, cap 5.

‘ is very hard says he, that the penance of him that is at
 ‘ the hour of death, should be true penance, seeing it comes
 ‘ so late : for when the parts of our body are tormented
 ‘ with pains, and our senses oppressed therewith, it is hard
 ‘ for a man to think upon any other thing. Wherefore this
 ‘ kind of conversion ought to be suspected of us as com-
 ‘ ing by co-action, not by free will. And although a man
 ‘ may think at that hour, that he is desirous to leave sin,
 ‘ yet he may easily be deceived therein.’ So he : putting
 in doubt, as you see, whether our penance at the last day is
 voluntary, or rather forced, and so not meritorious

But yet St. Augustine does more particularly express
 this matter in a sermon of his in these words :* ‘ When

‘ you shall be in your last sickness, my breth-
 ‘ ren, O how hard and difficult a thing will it be,
 ‘ how painful, how lamentable for you to repent
 ‘ and to be sorry, as for the evils which you have
 ‘ committed as for the good things which you
 ‘ have omitted. And why will this be so hard to
 ‘ you in that day, but because all thy attention
 ‘ of mind will be drawn thither, where the great-
 ‘ est force of your grief is : Many impediments
 ‘ also will occur to your heart in that hour, to hin-

*St. Augus-
tine's dis-
course of
the mise-
rable
death of
those that
defer their
conversion
until the
last hour.*

‘ der you from doing penance. For your body will be re-
 ‘ plenished with grief, and altogether afflicted with pain,
 ‘ death will draw near and terrify. And when worldly
 ‘ fathers will see their children enter, whom they have so
 ‘ much loved, and for whose cause, perhaps, they will
 ‘ think themselves going towards their damnation, with
 ‘ how lamentable an eye will they behold them ? Their
 ‘ wives sit by weeping ; the world gives still hope that
 ‘ they may escape, the devil dissuades them from penance,
 ‘ &c. O man, hast thou heard what I have told thee ? be-
 ‘ lievest thou, that shortly thou shalt prove all these things
 ‘ in thy own person. Wherefore I beseech thee to fall to
 ‘ penance, before thou art sick, dispose of thy house, make
 ‘ thy testament, do that which is to be done, whilst thou
 ‘ art in health, whilst thou art wise, whilst thou art thy
 ‘ own, &c.’ So St. Augustine to those who will follow
 his counsel.

* Aug. Serm. 48 ad. fratres in Eremito.

And in like sense, St. Isidore, who lived not long after him, after a large and effectual exhortation to all Christians, not to delay their conversion, and reconciliation to God by penance, but to do it out of hand, whilst they are young, strong, and in health, which he calls the sure way of salvation; sets down this terrible conclusion for such as are delayers, &c.* ‘He that living wickedly repents only
 ‘when he is in peril of death, as his damnation is uncertain, so is his pardon doubtful. Wherefore he that desires to be sure of pardon in his health, must repent and bewail his sins in his death. There are some men that quickly promise security to them that repent, of which people God says by Jeremiah the prophet:’ *Jer. vi.*
 ‘They healed the breach of the daughter of my people disgracefully, saying: Peace, peace: and there was no peace.’ ‘They did cure the contrition of God’s people with ignominy, for they did promise security to sinners, without doing sufficient penance.’ Hitherto St. Isidore. Who in his last words, as you see, insinuates, that penance done at the last day, is not sure of pardon: for we cannot be sure whether it be true and sufficient, or no.

The other reasons of school divines.

Which if you remember, was one of the chief reasons set down by school divines before; whereunto they add two others of great consideration; the first, that although we were certain that God, at the last hour, would always give us pardon for our sins: yet it would be a great indignity to rely upon that, because God created us not in this world, to offend him, and then to ask forgiveness, but for another far higher end, to wit, as the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Zachary uttered, *Luke i.*
 ‘That being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve him without fear, in holiness and justice, before him all our days.’ Which we cannot do, having once offended him after baptism, except we return to him by penance, and begin a good life. And consequently till we do this, we perform nothing of that, for which we are created, but do live in his disgrace and offence, increasing the same against us daily.

Ponder well this reason.

The second reason follows from the first, and is, that whereas we cannot serve God in holiness of life, or honour him as we should, except first by penance, we convert ourselves, and return unto

* St. Isidore, lib. de summo bono cap. 13.

him ; hence it ensues, that this conversion is not only necessary, but obligatory also in such sort, that by deferring the same long, we incur new sins, and thereby multiply God's wrath against us, conformably to the doctrines of St. Paul before-mentioned to the Romans, *Rom. ii.* And this point, school divines demonstrate by many strong and evident arguments,* although the time when precisely it binds, and how often, is not so easy to determine, but to be left to good men's judgments, and consciences ; but certainly cannot be deferred to the hour of death, which they show among other proofs, by the example of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity : for as it would be most absurd to defer these acts to the end of his life, that is, to defer to believe, hope, and love God, till death ; so is it also absurd to defer one's conversion ; seeing this is no less necessary to a Christian life, and to the exercise thereof, than the other. And by this a sinner may conceive what he does in deferring his conversion from day to day ; to wit, he multiplies and aggravates his own sins ; he confirms himself in God's displeasure, increases God's vengeance which hangs over him, loses all occasion of merit and good works, performs nothing of that for which he was created, enjoys no benefit of his being a Christian, and disposes himself daily to more certain and greater damnation.

In respect of which unworthy proceeding, it is presumed that the holy father and martyr of God, St. Cyprian, did pronounce that severe sentence, to the B. Antonianus : †

‘ Therefore, dear brother, such as do no penance,
 ‘ nor testify by the manifest profession of their
 ‘ tears, the hearty sorrow which they have for
 ‘ their sins, we do judge them to be debarred
 ‘ from all hope of communion and peace with us,
 ‘ yea, although they should humbly desire the
 ‘ same in their sickness, and peril of death, be-
 ‘ cause it is to be presumed, that they do not so
 ‘ much repent themselves of their sins, out of a true sor-
 ‘ row, as out of fear of imminent death, which compels them
 ‘ to be supplicants at that hour. But he is not worthy to
 ‘ receive comfort at his death, who in his health would not
 ‘ think that he was to die.’ Thus far St. Cyprian : whose

St. Cyprian rejects those who return not to God but at the hour of death.

* See Suarez, p. 3. q. 90. art. 4. † Cyp. Epist. 52. Edi. Pamæi.

censure and decree, though it may seem somewhat hard, and has been moderated since that time by some later pastors of God's Church,* who have appointed that absolution and communion be not denied to them that demand the same with humility, at the Church's hand, though it be at the hour of death, leaving the rest to God's secret judgments, yet we may see by this, and by much more, that is to be found in the writings of holy fathers; how doubtful they were of the success of such conversions, as are made only at the last day, when death draws near.

St. Augustine's words are terrible in one of his homilies, where he says,† the penance which is demanded by a sick man (to wit, to be confessed and absolved of his sins) is sick and weak also of itself; but that which is demanded by him who lies a-dying, I am afraid lest it die in like manner with him: that is to say, lest it profit him little by reason of his delay. And in another place the holy father goes yet further saying.‡ He is far enough from faith that expects the time of his old age to do penance, and turn to God. And how deeply ought this to move any man, that has a conscience, to look to himself.

But here, perhaps, some man, astonished with the severity of these speeches of the ancient fathers, may ask, what is then to be done when a man finds himself at the last hour, unreconciled to God and his Church? Whereunto I answer, that in no case he ought to despair, but remembering rather that which has been laid down by me at large, in the second part of this book,§ concerning the infinite mercies of God, above all his other works (which chapter he may read, or cause to be read to him for his comfort) he must cry heartily to him for pardon, and to his Church for absolution, and so much the more, by how much longer he has by negligence deferred his conversion: which if it is hearty, true and sincere at this time, no doubt but Almighty God will most certainly accept thereof. And all the doubt which the holy fathers do make of this acceptance, is, lest the said conversion be not sincere, and therefore they leave it doubtful. Of which doubtful case, you shall for a final conclusion hear the sentence and resolution

* Leo. 1. Epist. 89. & Cælest. 1. Epist, 2. ad Episc Galliaë.
Serm. 57, de Temp.

† Aug. Serm. 71, ad frates in Eremo.

§ Supra. parte 2. cap. 1.

† Ang.

of St. Augustine at large, and therewith we will end this point.

Thus then writes that holy man, after much deliberation upon the matter :* ‘ Therefore he that has done
The resolution of St. Augustine about the doubtfulness of final conversion. ‘ penance truly, and so shall die (being absolved
 ‘ from the bonds wherewith he was tied and separated from the body of *CHRIST*) he goes
 ‘ to rest. But if a man, in the extreme necessity of his sickness, do desire to receive penance, and do pass hence reconciled ; I confess
 ‘ unto you, that we do not deny him that which
 ‘ he demands, but we presume not that he goes hence in
 ‘ a good state. I do not presume, I tell you plainly, I do
 ‘ not presume. A faithful man, that has lived well, goes
 ‘ away securely. He that dies the same hour he was baptized, goes hence securely. He that is reconciled in his
 ‘ health, and does penance, and afterwards lives well, goes
 ‘ hence securely. But he that is reconciled, and does penance at the last end, I am not secure that he goes hence
 ‘ securely. Where I am secure, I do tell you, and do give
 ‘ security ; and when am I not secure, I may give penance, but I can give no security. But here, perhaps, some
 ‘ man will say to me, good priest, if you know not in what
 ‘ state a man goes hence, nor can give security that he
 ‘ is saved, to whom penance was assigned at his death, teach us, I beseech you, how we must live after our
 ‘ conversion and penance . Isay unto you, abstain from drunkenness, from concupiscence of the flesh, from theft, from
 ‘ much babbling, from immoderate laughter, from idle
 ‘ words, for which men are to give an account in the day
 ‘ of judgment. Lo, how small things I have named in your
 ‘ sight ; but yet all these are great matters, and pestilent to
 ‘ those who commit them. Nay, yet, I tell you further ;
 ‘ a man must not only abstain from these vices, and the
 ‘ like, after penance done, but also before, when he is in
 ‘ health. For if he puts it off to the last end of his life,
 ‘ he cannot tell whether he will be able to receive penance
 ‘ and confess his sins to God, and to the priest, or no
 ‘ Behold the cause why I say to you, that a man should

* Hom. 41, ex. 50.

‘ live well before penance, and after penance better.’ Thus
 ‘ St. Augustine, who continues yet further in the same dis-
 ‘ course, in these ensuing words.

*The con-
 tinuance
 of St. Au-
 gustine’s
 discourse
 of the dan-
 ger of de-
 lay.*

‘ Mark well, says he, what I speak, and per-
 ‘ haps it will be needful to expound my meaning
 ‘ more plainly, lest any man mistake me. What
 ‘ say I then? that this man who repents at the
 ‘ end shall be damned? I do not say so. What
 ‘ then? do I say he shall be saved? no. What
 ‘ then do I say? I say, I know not: I say, I
 ‘ presume not: I promise not: I know not. Wilt thou de-
 ‘ liver thyself from this doubt, escape this dangerous and
 ‘ uncertain point? do penance then whilst thou art whole.
 ‘ For if thou dost penance whilst thou art in health, and
 ‘ the last day chance to come upon thee, run presently to
 ‘ be reconciled, and so doing, thou art safe. And why art
 ‘ thou safe? because thou didst penance in that time where-
 ‘ in thou mightest have sinned. But if thou wilt do penance
 ‘ then, when thou canst sin no longer, thou leavest not sin,
 ‘ but sin leaves thee. But you will say to me, how know
 ‘ you, whether God will forgive a man’s sins at the last
 ‘ hour, or no? you say very well, I know it not. For if I
 ‘ knew that penance would not profit a man at the last hour,
 ‘ I would not give it him. Again if I knew that it would
 ‘ deliver him, I would not warn you, I would not terrify

*A notable
 sayning of
 St. Augus-
 tine.*

‘ you, as I do. Two things there are in this
 ‘ matter; either God pardons a man, doing pen-
 ‘ ance at the hour of death, or he does not pardon
 ‘ him. Which of these two will be, I know not.

‘ Wherefore, if you be wise, take that which is
 ‘ certain, and let go the uncertain.’ Hitherto are St. Au-
 ‘ gustine’s words of the doubtful case of those who do
 ‘ penance at the last day.

*Many per-
 ish everlas-
 tingly by
 delay.*

And here I would have the careful Christian
 to consider with me this one point. If they that
 repent and do penance, at the last day, do pass
 hence notwithstanding, in such dangerous doubt-
 fulness, as St. Augustine shows, what ought we
 to think of all such who want either time or ability, or
 will, or place, or means, or grace, to do any penance at all,
 at that hour? what must we say of all those who die sud-
 denly? who are struck dumb, or senseless as many are?
 what shall we say of those that are abandoned by God, and

given over to vice, even to the last breath? I have showed before out of St. Paul, 2 Cor. xi. that ordinary sinners die, according as they live. So that it is a singular privilege for a wicked man to be permitted to do penance at his death, and then if his penance is so doubtful as St. Augustine has declared, what dismal case are all others in? I mean the greatest part, who repent not at all, but die as they lived, and are forsaken by Almighty God in that extremity, according to his threats, when he says, *Prov. i. Because I called, and you refused: I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded. You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction as a tempest shall be at hand: when tribulation and distress shall come upon you. Then shall they call upon me and I will not hear: they shall rise in the morning and shall not find me.*

This is both dreadful and lamentable which the prophet says of such as defer their conversion from time to time, *Psal. lviii. They shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs; and shall go round about the city.* *A dreadful saying.* The words that go immediately before, and do immediately follow, express more plainly the greatness of this threat. For the verse before is, *God of Israel, attend to visit all the nations: have no mercy on all them that work iniquity.* That is, who work iniquity to the end, without change. And immediately after ensues, *Behold they shall speak with their mouth, and a sword is in their lips, for who, say they, hath heard us? But thou, O Lord, shall laugh at them.* That is to say, these men at their last extremity will cry for help, and their cry will be as sharp to pierce men's ears, as a sword is; and yet notwithstanding no man will hear them. And thou, O Lord, who only canst help them, wilt be so far from hearing or pitying their case, that thou shalt also laugh at their misery and destruction. By all which, is signified the great calamity of such as defer their conversion to the last day, expressed by three circumstances, alleged in the former sentence.

For first, he says. *They shall return at evening:* that is, at the hour of death. For as the evening is the end of the day, and the beginning of night: so is this time the end of light, and *Turning to God at the evening.*

the beginning of all darkness to the wicked. In which sense Christ said, *John ix. I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day. The night cometh when no man can work.* At this time then, that is, at this evening, in this twilight, between day and darkness when the pleasant brightness and heat of all sun beams are past; the brightness, I mean of worldly pomp is consumed; when the heat of concupiscence, of carnal love, of pleasure, is quenched; when the beautiful summer-day of this life is ended, and the boisterous winter-night of death draws on: then, says the prophet, will the wicked man begin perforce to turn to God, then will he repent; then will he resolve on his conversion.

*Final
turning
to God
not ac-
cepted.*

But what, will this be accepted? you have heard the prophet's request to God, *Psal. lviii. Have no mercy on all them that work iniquity.* Not because the prophet wishes God to be unmerciful but because he well knew God's immutable justice towards such kind of men, as turn to him only at the evening. Whose misery, in this extremity, he expresses further, by saying, *They shall suffer hunger like dogs and shall compass the city:* signifying their great and inestimable distress by the hunger and howling of those creatures; and by the second, their pitiful solicitude in seeking comfort from all that are within the circuit of God's city or Church, but shall find none. For whither will they turn themselves in this distress? under their worldly wealth, power or riches? alas, they are no more, and the scripture tells us, that *Prov xi. Riches shall not prosper in the day of revenge.* Will they turn unto their carnal friends? but what comfort can they give, but unavailing tears and comfortless mourning? will they ask help of the saints in heaven, that they may pray for them in this instant? they cannot choose but remember what is written, *Psal. cxlix. The Saints shall rejoice in glory—the high praises of God shall be in their mouth: and two-edged swords in their hands. To execute vengeance upon the nations, chastisements among the people. To bind their kings with fetters, and their nobles in manacles of iron. To execute upon them the judgment that is written: This glory is, to all his saints.* Their only refuge then must be in God, who indeed is the only sure refuge of all. But in these circumstances he will not hear them, as we have said before, but rather contemn and

laugh at their misery. Not that he will act contrary to his promise of receiving the sinner at whatsoever time he repents, and turns from his impiety : but because this death-bed repentance is seldom true and sincere.

SECT. III.—*Containing sundry examples of the same matter, worthy to be noted.*

WHEREFORE to draw towards an end, concerning this subject of delay, what wise man is there in the world, who, reading this, will not fear the deferring of his conversion, though it were but for one day ? who knows whether this will not be the last day in which God will call him. God says, *Prov. i. Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded—I also will laugh in your destruction.* He does not say how many times, or how long he did call and hold out his hand. God says, *I stand at the door and knock*, but says not how often he does that, or how many knocks he gives. Again, he said of wicked Jezabel, the feigned prophetess in the Apocalypse, *Apoc. ii.* that he has given her a time to do penance, and she would not, and therefore she should perish, but he says not how long this time for repentance lasted. We read of wonderful examples concerning this subject. Herod, the father, had a call given him, and that a loud one, when St. John Baptist was sent to him, *Mark vi.* and his heart was so far touched that he willingly heard him, and followed his counsel in many things, as one of the evangelists notes. But yet, because he deferred the matter, and took not time, when he was offered, he was cast off again and his last doings made worse than his former. Herod the tetrarch, his son had a call also, *Luke 11, 23,* and *Matt. 14,* when he felt that desire to see Christ and some miracles done by him ; he answered not to the call, it did him no good, but rather much hurt. What a great call had Pilate given him, *Matt. xxvii.* if he had been so fortunate as to have hearkened to it presently, when he was made to understand the innocence of Christ, as appears by washing his hands in testimony thereof, and his wife sending to him, to mind him of it ; No less a call had king Agrippa, when he cried out upon hear-

What danger is in delay.

Herod the first.

Herod the second.

Pilate.

Agrippa.

ing of St. Paul; *Acts xxvi.* ‘*In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian.*’ But because he deferred the matter this motion passed away again.

Twice happy had Pharaoh been, if he had resolved himself presently, upon that motion he felt, when he cried to Moses, *Exod. ix.* *I have sinned, and God is just.* But by delay he came worse than ever he was before. St. Luke reports how Felix, governor of Jewry for the Romans, conferred secretly oftentimes with St. Paul, that was his prisoner, and heard of him the faith of Christ, wherein he was greatly moved; especially at one time, when St. Paul disputed of God’s justice, of chastity, and of the day of judgment before him, and Drusilla, his wife, that was a Jew, whereat Felix trembled. But yet he deferred this resolution, bidding Paul to depart, and come again another time; and so it all, by delay, came to no effect. How many men perish daily, some cut off by death, some left by God and given over to reprobate sense; who might have saved themselves, if they had not deferred their conversion from day to day, but had taken their resolution presently, when they felt God call within their heart? and this may be witnessed by daily examples which we ourselves have seen or heard of in England, of such who having had, or pretended, good desires to make this resolution, and amend their past lives, have deferred it so long that their deaths have been miserable, either by senseless or careless behaviour therein.

The danger of passing the day of our vocation. Almighty God is ready and bountiful to call us; but he binds himself to no time or space; but comes and goes at his pleasure. And they who take not time when offered, are inexcusable before his justice, and do not know whether ever it will be offered to them again or no. For this thing is in the will and knowledge of God alone, who takes mercy where it pleases him, and is bound to none. And when the prefixed time of calling is once past: woe be to that party; for a thousand worlds will not purchase it again. Christ shows wonderfully the importance of this matter; when entering into Jerusalem, upon Palm-Sunday, amidst all the mirth and glory of his triumph, he could not chose but weep upon that city, considering this was the last day of mercy and vocation that should be given to the same.

And therefore he says with tears : *Luke xxi.* ‘ If thou also hast known, and that in this thy day, the things that appertain to thy peace : but now they are hidden from thy eyes.’ As if he had said, if thou knewest, Jerusalem, as well as I do what mercy is offered thee even this day, which is the last that ever such an offer will be made, thou wouldst presently accept thereof. But now this secret judgment of my father is hidden from thee, and therefore thou makest little account thereof till destruction comes suddenly upon thee. And soon after it did, for not full forty years after our Saviour’s passion, the said city of Jerusalem was besieged, taken, ransacked, burnt, and overthrown by the Roman emperors, Vespasian and his son Titus, according to the prophecy of our Saviour in the Gospel, *Luke xx. & xxi.* and above eleven hundred thousand slain therein, if we believe Josephus* the learned Jewish historiographer that was present at that siege and wrote the history, and above four-score and seventeen thousand taken alive and put to slavery. And during the siege itself, they were reduced to such extreme misery, that mothers eat their own children ; and this for delaying their repentance, and not answering God’s call, nor accepting the time offered by him. An example of God’s justice, the most famous and admirable perhaps, that ever happened in this world, upon one nation and city ; and is recorded for such in the writings, not only of the Hebrew and Christian, but in like manner of heathen writers ; Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio, Phlegon, and others, that have left written the lives of the emperors Vespasian and Titus.†

And because this object is of a great and singular importance, and handled often, and more earnestly by the ancient holy fathers of God’s Church to the Christians of their time, I shall not think it unprofitable nor ungrateful to the reader, to entertain him yet a little further with the recital of some sayings, arguments, reasons, and exhortations used by the said fathers, to warn men of this dangerous deceit of delay in their conversion. St. Basil uses this speech in one of his homilies : ‡ ‘ This is the greatest care of our adversary, the devil, to persuade us that we

* Joseph. l. 5, de bello Judaico. c 1, 2, 4, 28, & l. 7, c. 23.

† Tacit. l. 5. hist. Sueton. Plut. Dio in chron. in vita Vesp.

‡ Basil hom. de Baptis.

‘ offer the present day to his service, and to-morrow to God’s; and when to-morrow comes, to do the same, for that it is also present, and so by delay, death coming instead of to-morrow, we are sent to hell for an over late repentance.’

And the same father in another place,* after an earnest exhortation not to defer our conversion till our old age, but presently in our youth to turn to God, and begin a new life, concludes thus: ‘ Let the last day be always before

An admonition worth the noting.

‘ thy eyes, and when thou dost rise in the morning, be doubtful whether thou shalt arrive at the evening; and when thou lieth down upon thy bed at night, presume not on a security that

‘ thou shalt live to see the sun return to shine upon thee again.’ So he, against delay, and procrastination in our conversion.

St. Augustine, who had experienced the danger of this deceit in himself before his conversion, as we have already said, handles this point in many places, with much fervour and feeling, and more at length. For having, in his books of confessions, accused himself to Almighty God of these delays, he reports that he said among other things:† My answerings to God’s call, that now, even now, I will convert, had no measure or end: and this *let me alone a little*, grew out in great length. But in the end, he broke off all delays, and received such infinite consolation thereby, that he could never have imagined it before, nor remember afterwards, without infinite gratitude and thanks to Almighty God for the same. ‘ How sweet, O Lord, was it made to

St. Augustine’s comfort after his conversion.

me presently,’ says he.‡ ‘ to be deprived of those treasures of the world, which before I was afraid that I should want; thou didst cast them out from me, O true and highest sweetness; thou, I say, didst cast them out and didst enter in their place, who are more sweet than all the

pleasures and sweetness itself, &c.’ Thus he, of the comfort of his own resolution, when he turned to God and began a virtuous life in his youth.

But when speaking to others, he handled the subject of delay, he was ordinarily very earnest, as well knowing the

* Basil, in admonitione ad filium spiritualement Tom. 2.

† Aug. 1. 9, Conf. c. 5.

‡ Lib. 9. Conf. c. 1. § Aug. expl. in Paul 120. i

importance thereof ; and some examples we will set down in this place.* ‘What is so full of longanimity, what is
 ‘ so full of mercy, as the proceeding of Almighty God
 ‘ with sinners ; men sin, and yet are suffered to live ; they
 ‘ increase their sins, and their lives are enlarged : they
 ‘ blaspheme God daily, and he makes his sun to rise upon
 ‘ them, as well the bad as the good ; he calls them every
 ‘ way to amendment ; he calls, by giving them time of
 ‘ longer life : he calls, by reading of good books ; he calls,
 ‘ by hearing of sermons ; he calls, by inward inspirations ;
 ‘ he calls, by the whips of correction ; he calls, by the
 ‘ mercy and sweetness of spiritual consolation : how great
 ‘ is the longanimity and mercy of this God ? but take
 ‘ heed, thou abuse not this longanimity, lest, as the apostle
 ‘ says. *Rom. ii.* thou heapest to thyself his ireful wrath, in
 ‘ the day of revenge and just judgment. He
 ‘ would by this longanimity bring thee to repent-
 ‘ ance, and to change thy life, but thou sayest
 ‘ every day : let this day pass, and to-morrow we
 ‘ shall think of it ; and when to-morrow comes,
 ‘ thou sayest, that shall not be the last, and so do
 ‘ pass to the third day : and suddenly comes upon thee
 ‘ the wrath of God ; for as the wise man says, *Eccl. v.*
 ‘ When by deferring thy conversion, thou hast heaped to
 ‘ thyself his wrath ; in the day of vengeance, thou shalt
 ‘ feel him just, whom thou contemnest his longanimity.’

*A remarkable
 saying of
 St. Augustine.*

The same father and doctor has another discourse in a sermon of his,† upon the parable of the husbandman, that called labourers into his vineyard, at the first, third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hour, and every one of them had their hire at the end of the day, as Christ our Saviour does declare in St. Matthew’s gospel, *Matt. xx.* Which St. Augustine applies to the different vocations of men to God’s service ; some in their infancy, some in their youth, some in their middle age, some in their latter years, and some at the very end of their lives, which is the literal meaning of that most excellent parable. But let us hear St. Augustine’s notable discourse, and exhortation thereupon :
 ‘ Stand, attend, my brethron, says he, and let no man linger, or delay to come presently, and labour in this vineyard, being sure that whensoever he comes, he will have

* Aug. expl. in Paul 120. † Aug. Ser. 69 de verbis Dom. apud Joan.

‘ his penny, as well as the rest. But though it is true, he
 ‘ is sure, to have his penny when he has laboured : yet he
 ‘ must not defer his coming; nor did any of those that
 ‘ were called at the first, or the third hour, say to the hus-
 ‘ bandman, expect we will come at the sixth, or ninth, or
 ‘ eleventh hour. When thou art called, come presently,
 ‘ for the reward is equally promised to all. Art
He that is ‘ thou called at the sixth hour? come quickly,
called ‘ for thou knowest not whether thou wilt live to
must ‘ to the seventh hour, and wherefore then dost
come pre- ‘ thou put off him that calls thee, seeing thou art
sently ‘ sure of his reward, but not sure of the day or
and not ‘ hour, which he will allow thee to come in?
delay.

‘ Take heed lest thou deprive thyself by deferring of that,
 ‘ which he has promised thee by his calling.’ So he.

And in the same discourse a little after, he answers the
 objection of negligent people out of the speech of God, by
 Ezekiel the prophet, *Ezek.* xviii. in these words: ‘ If
 ‘ whensoever I shall be converted, says the negligent world-
 ‘ ling, Almighty God, who is merciful, will forget all my
 ‘ iniquities, why then should I convert myself rather to-day
 ‘ than to-morrow? whereunto St. Augustine answers, in
 ‘ these words: Thou sayest, my brother, that to-
An objec- ‘ morrow thou wilt be converted, and that to-mor-
tion of the ‘ row will be the end of all thy iniquities, but
negli- ‘ how knowest thou whether the end of thy life
gent; ‘ will not be before to-morrow? thou dost well
answered ‘ in rejoicing, that, whensoever thou shalt be con-
by St. ‘ verted, God will forgive thee thy iniquities;
Augustine. ‘ but thou hast no promise of God that thou shalt

‘ live till to-morrow. For which cause the holy scripture
 ‘ counsels thee another thing. Be not slow to convert thy-
 ‘ self to God, nor defer the same from day to day, for
 ‘ God’s wrath comes upon a sudden, and in time of revenge
 ‘ he will destroy thee. Wherefore do not defer, my bro-
 ‘ ther, do not shut that gate against thyself which God has
 ‘ opened: behold the giver of pardon opens the door to
 ‘ thee, why dost thou defer to enter? thou shouldst rejoice
 ‘ with all thy heart, if he had opened the same at thy
 ‘ knock, and yet he has opened, and wilt thou remain with-
 ‘ out? It is written in the scripture of the works of mer-
 ‘ cy: say not to thy friend, go and return, to-morrow I
 ‘ will give you, whereas thou mayest give forthwith. Thou

‘ hast heard the precept of not deferring to be merciful to others, and wilt thou, by deferring, be cruel to thyself ; thou must not defer the giving of bread, and wilt thou defer the receiving of pardon for thy sins ? be merciful to thy own soul ; bestow this alms upon her, and do not say that thou givest any thing to her of thy own, but do not repel the hand of him that offers to give her so great an alms as is the remission of all her sins by speedy repentance, which thou goest about to evacuate by delay.’ Thus far St. Augustine, whose words ought to weigh much with any discreet reader.

The great and ancient doctor Origen, that was father and master of so many martyrs, handles this argument otherwise, but yet very largely upon these words of Jeremiah the prophet :* We have cured Babylon, and she is not healed ; let us forsake her, and let us go every one to his own land, because her judgment has reached even to the heavens. Which speech Origen applies to the angels, when they are sent by Almighty God to procure the conversion of a sinful soul, understood here, says he, by Babylon, in regard of the confusions, and disorder of her unlawful appetites, contrary, oftentimes, the one to the other. Which soul the said angels taking upon them to cure, and procuring many motives, as well external as internal, to stir her up to repentance, and change of life ; if in the end she remains obstinate, or loses the time by trifling from day to day, what can the good angels do, says Origen, or say more, than what is here set down by the prophet ? we have gone about to cure this Babylon, this miserable soul, replenished with confusion of sin, and worldly vanities, we have applied what remedies we could ; we have expected long and effected little ; at length her judgment is past from us to the heavens, and from thence will come the sentence ; let us begone each one to his own home. Which words being once uttered, continues Origen, their departure is thy damnation, as being incorrigible ; because thou wilt not be cured : And then he makes this conclusion and exhortation. ‘ Beware, thou man, lest the physician sent thee by God (whether he be an angel or what man soever that labors

The curing of Babylon what it means.

* Orig. hom. 3. Jer. 51.

‘ with thee for thy salvation, and for the curing of thy soul) abandon and leave thee : for if he does, thou art in a desperate case.’ So Origen, in those early days of the primitive Church : and his warning ought much to be weighed by those that weary out so many spiritual physicians, (sent them by God, as they with reason may imagine, seeing they seek nothing but the curing of their souls;) and send them away afflicted and discontented, because Babylon will not be cured; and so their judgment passes up to heaven, and God calls the cause of their condemnation to his own tribunal, by reason of their obstinate lingering and delaying their conversion from day to day.

And conformably to this ; St. Hierom, in his questions upon Genesis, notes,* that Almighty God seems sometimes as it were to lose his patience with such people. And so when

A strange example of those who perished in the flood of Noah.

he had said that he would give them a hundred and twenty years for repentance before the flood of Noah, and premonished them by the building of the ark, when the flood drew near : seeing that in a hundred years, wherein the ark was built, none would repent, he cut off the last twenty years, and brought in the deluge at the end of the said

hundred, and did so take his grace from them all that of so great a multitude of mankind, as then must be presumed to have been upon the face of the earth, only eight souls were saved in the ark, as the scripture accounts, *Gen. vi.* because the rest of mankind could not be brought to repentance, though they heard Noah and his children continually threatening an universal deluge, and saw them build their ark to avoid the same. A strange example of God’s justice against such as neglect his call, or defer to follow it from day to day. For in the end they come to be senseless, and to feel or care nothing, according to the saying of Seneca the philosopher,† who puts this difference between the sickness of

The difference between the sickness of the body and of the mind.

the body and sickness of the mind : That sickness of the body, the greater it is, the more painful and sensible it is, is the more complained of by the patient ; but the diseases of our minds, the greater they are, the less they are felt, and least complained of by us. As for example : the more proud or presumptuous a man is, the less he perceives or

* Hier. l. quest. in Gen. † Senec. in Senent.

mislikes the same : and so in other maladies of the mind. And generally the more full of sins and infirmities a soul is, she is the less sensible of it, because the malady itself takes away or diminishes her sense and feeling ; so that, as the wise man says, *Prov. xviii. The wicked man when he is come into the depth of sins contemneth.* That is, has no scruple or feeling, or conscience at all, which is an ordinary effect of negligent delay in our amendment.

Which deep and dreadful point the divine father St. Gregory does excellently discuss, showing how one sin by delaying repentance draws on another, so that it becomes at length, not only a sin in itself, but both the cause and punishment of other sins also, and thereby draws to the depth whereof we have spoken. You shall hear St. Gregory's discourse, in his own words :*

‘ Not so quickly purged by penance, either is a sin
 ‘ that is cause of another sin, or is a sin that is
 ‘ a punishment of another sin. The reason
 ‘ whereof is that every sin which penance does
 ‘ not wipe away, does by its weight draw us pre-
 ‘ sently to commit another sin, and thereby comes
 ‘ to pass, that this former sin is not only a sin in
 ‘ itself, but the cause also of another sin ; and the
 ‘ other subsequent sin so caused by the first, is
 ‘ not only a sin but the punishment also of the said former
 ‘ sin. For Almighty God by his just judgment does so
 ‘ darken the heart of the sinner, that, by the demerit of
 ‘ the former sin, he falls into other sins, adding still sins
 ‘ unto sins. And whereas the former sin is commonly out
 ‘ of malice, because the sinner knows what he does, the
 ‘ second sin oftentimes is out of ignorance, in punishment
 ‘ of the former.

*A notable
 discourse
 of St.
 Gregory.
 how sins
 are mul-
 tiplied
 and made
 more
 grievous
 by delay.*

‘ And whereas in the first sin, which is both a sin and
 ‘ the cause of sin, the sinner sinned against his own know-
 ‘ ledge and understanding ; God permits that in the follow-
 ‘ ing sins, which are both sins and punishments of sin, the
 ‘ sinner loses the light of his knowledge and understand-
 ‘ ing (against which he sinned before) so far, that by the
 ‘ demerit of the said former sin, the pit of ensuing sins is
 ‘ covered and hidden from his eyes ; so that he who sinned
 ‘ before wilfully against his own knowledge, as has been

* Greg. l. 25. moral. c. 9.

‘ said, does by God’s just judgment fall unwittingly into
‘ the said pit of subsequent sins, his divine majesty so or-
‘ dering ; that sins be punished by sins : and that the in-
‘ crease or multiplication of sins be made the very scourge
‘ and chastisement of the sinners ?’

Finally St. Gregory concludes thus : ‘ These men, who
‘ defer their penance and conversion, have already suffi-
‘ cient cause for which they deserve to be damned, but yet
‘ their sin is suffered to grow, to the end that a more griev-
‘ ous and horrible punishment may be laid upon them.
‘ Their first sin, and cause of sin, deserves damnation ; but
‘ God expects that the increase of torments may justly be
‘ also inflicted for their subsequent sins, that are punish-
‘ ments of the former.’ So St. Gregory. And let all the
delayers and procrastinators attentively consider the rigour
of this discourse.

But to draw to an end of that which would have no end,
if I should run through all the ancient fathers’ sayings and
writings on this subject ; I will conclude with St. Augus-
tine, who taking upon him, in one of his books, to refute
this pernicious error of delaying our conversion, has these
words :* Some are wont to say, I am young yet, and will
follow my delights for a time, and then I will do penance.
Which is, as if a man should say, I will stab myself with
a sword now, and after I will go to the physician or sur-
geon to cure me. Alas ! poor miserable man ! knowest
thou not, that in an instant a wound is given, which in a
long and painful time is not healed ; so he that commits any
sin, as fornication, or the like, with this hope, that after he
will do penance ; why does he not rather fear, lest some
fever, or other unexpected chance, bring death suddenly
upon him : and that by this means, his temporal delay fail-
ing him, there succeeded in place thereof everlasting dam-
nation ?

The same father in another place showing the danger of
two extremes in a sinner, the one of despair, the other of
too much hope, from which follows the putting off our con-
version ; refutes the one and the other, and exalts the mer-
cy and justice of God in them both, saying thus :† ‘ Lest
‘ men by despair should give themselves to a wicked life,
‘ God has laid before us the secure haven of indulgence

* Aug. l. de honest mulier. † Aug. con. 1. in Psal ci.

‘ and pardon, whensoever we repent; and on the other side,
 ‘ lest men should delay their penance, and live wickedly
 ‘ upon hope of his pardon, he has made the day of our
 ‘ death uncertain, preventing hereby most providentially
 ‘ both inconveniences; so that such as turn to him, may be
 ‘ received; and such as defer their conversion may be ter-
 ‘ rified.—Wherefore, my brother, do not despair,
 ‘ because mercy is promised thee, but fear also *The two*
 ‘ if thou defer thy conversion; because God has *danger-*
 ‘ not promised that thou shalt live till to-morrow. *ous ex-*
 ‘ Some men sin by despairing, others sin by ho- *tremes of*
 ‘ ping, both of them are perilous, both are dread- *despair*
 ‘ ful: woe be to them that despair, woe be to *and too*
 ‘ them that have a perverse hope, and thereupon *much*
 ‘ defer their penance.—God has distributed his time, now *hope.*
 ‘ he calls thee, now he exhorts thee, now he expects thee
 ‘ and thy conversion; but if thou delayest and put off the
 ‘ present time, and according to the hardness of thy impe-
 ‘ nitent heart dost hoard to thyself his wrath in the day of
 ‘ vengeance, and of God’s just judgment: then will he pay
 ‘ thee according to thy works, and not otherwise.’ So St.
 ‘ Augustine.

Out of what has been said, we may gather, how impor-
 tant it is, not to neglect the counsel of the wise man ex-
 horting us, in these words: *Eccl. v. Delay not to be con-*
verted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day, for
his wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of ven-
geance he will destroy thee. The same is inculcated to the
 Hebrews by St. Paul, who citing, out of Psalm. xciv. these
 words: *To day if you shall hear his voice harden not your*
hearts, &c. says Heb. iii. But exhort one another every
day whilst to-day is named, lest any one of you be harden-
ed by the deceitfulness of sin. Which counsel every one
 applying to himself, should follow the motions of God’s spi-
 rit within him, and hearken to his call without delay, con-
 sidering what a grievous sin it is to resist the Holy Ghost.
 When therefore you feel an interior motion towards your
 conversion, think it is God knocks at the door of your
 heart, and that if you presently open he will enter and
 dwell within you. But if you defer until to morrow, how
 know you whether he will knock and call again.

Alas! what hope have you of gain from this perilous de-
 lay you make? your account is increased, greater satisfac-

tion will be due, your enemy grows stronger, yourself weaker, and the difficulties of your conversion multiplied. What then can keep you back even one day from returning to your duty ! it is the desire of enjoying a little longer the vain amusements of the world ? alas ! though they please you for the present, remember the prophet says, *Deut. xxxii. The day of destruction is at hand, and the time makes haste to come.* Which day being come what can you hope ? do you think to cry then that salutary *Peccavi* with the royal prophet ? remember even Judas did so, but it availed him nothing. Do you intend to redeem your sins by the large alms, you will then order to be distributed ? remember that those foolish virgins, who only filled their lamps at the instant they were to have entered into the marriage feast, were shut out, and disowned by the bridegroom. Do you think to weep and mourn, and move the judge with your tears at that instant ? consider that Esau found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears, as St. Paul remarks, *Heb. xii.* Do you intend to multiply your vows and make great promises in that distress ? call to mind the example of Antiochus in his extremity. What promises of good works, what vows of a virtuous life, did he not make to God on condition he escaped ? and notwithstanding he prevailed nothing thereby, the holy scripture telling us, *2 Mac. ix. Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy.* A terrible example of God's justice offered, Christians, to your consideration, not to cast you into despair when you are brought to the last extremity ; but to dissuade you from deferring your conversion, assuring you it is not without reason the prophet said, *Isaiah lv. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.* And St. Paul, *2 Cor. vi. Behold, now is the acceptable time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.* The time in which you feel those interior motions of your heart soliciting to repentance, the time in which you hear that inward voice of God calling to your duty, that present time is the time in which God is to be found, in which he is near at hand to embrace all them that truly turn unto him, and make a firm resolution of persevering hereafter in a virtuous life. If we defer and make not a right use of this time ; we have no warrant that he will call again upon us, no security that he will hereafter receive us. Wherefore I will conclude

with St. Augustine,* that he is a careless and graceless man, who knowing all this, will notwithstanding venture his salvation on the doubtful event of a sinful repentance.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of three other impediments that hinder men from resolution; to wit, slothfulness, careless negligence, and hardness of heart; utterly condemning all motions and callings of Almighty God? with the conclusions of the whole book.

SECT. I. *Of Slothfulness.*

BESIDES all other impediments and hindrances, which hitherto have been named and recounted, there remain yet divers others, if a man could examine the particular consciences of all such as do not resolve to return to God. But these three are mentioned and to be discussed in this chapter, are so public and known, that I cannot pass them over without canvassing them: for many times men are sick and ill affected within; and yet know not their own diseases, the only discovering whereof is, to such as are desirous of their own health, sufficient to divert the danger of the sickness.

First then, the impediment of sloth, is a great and ordinary hindrance of resolution to many men, but especially to idle and delicate people, whose life having been in ease and rest, they persuade themselves they can take no pains nor abide any hardships, though they would never so feign, if you believe them. These people proceed thus: they will confess as much, and a great deal more, than is said before, to be true, and that they would also gladly, for their parts, put the same in execution, but that they cannot. Their bodies cannot bear it, they cannot fast, they cannot pray, they cannot leave their sports, recreations, and merry companions, they should die presently, as they say, with melancholy, if they did it; yet in their hearts they desire that they could do the same; which seeing they cannot, no doubt say they, but God will accept of their good desire, and pardon them the rest. But let them hearken a little to what the

*Excuses
of nice
and
slothful
people*

* Tract. 33, in Joan.

scripture says herself : *Prov. xxi.* ‘ Desires kill the slothful ; ’ for his hands have refused to work at all. He longeth ’ and desireth all the day ; but he that is just, will give, ’ and will not cease.’ And Christ says, *Matt. xxv.* ‘ The ’ unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness, ’ there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ And when he passed by the way, and found a fig tree with leaves without fruit, which signified desires without works, he gave it presently an everlasting curse. Finally, the prophet David detests those men, and says also, they are detested by Almighty God, *Psalms. lxxii.* They are not in the labour of men.

From this fountain of sloth doth proceed many effects that hinder the slothful from good resolutions.

Drowsiness. And the first is, a certain heaviness and sleepy drowsiness, towards all goodness, according to what the scripture says, *Prov. xix.* *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.* For which cause St. Paul says, *Ephes. v.* Rise, thou that sleepest. And Christ cries out so often : Look about you and watch. You will see many men in the world, with whom, if you talk of a cow, or a calf, or a fat ox, of a piece of ground, or the like, they can both hear and talk willingly ; but if you reason with them about their salvation, and of their inheritance in the kingdom of heaven ; they answer not at all, but will hear as if they were in a dream. Of these persons, says the wise man : *Prov. vi.* *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard ? when wilt thou rise out of thy sleep ? Thou wilt sleep a little, thou wilt slumber a little, thou wilt fold thy hands a little to sleep ; And want shall come upon thee, as a traveller, and poverty as a man armed.*

The second effect of sloth, is a certain fear of pains and labour, causing doubts where there is none ; for, as the scripture says : *Prov. xviii.*

Fear casteth down the slothful. And the prophet says of the like, *Psalms. lii.* *There have they trembled for fear where there was no fear.* These men frame to themselves strange imaginations of the service of Almighty God, and of very dangerous events, if they should embrace and follow the same. One says, if I should fast much, it would without doubt corrupt my blood. Another says, if I should pray and stand bareheaded long, I should die most certainly of a rheum. A third says, if I should keep account of

all my sins to confess them, it would quickly kill me with sadness. And yet all this is nothing else but sloth, as the scripture testifies in these words : *Prov. xxii. The slothful man saith ; There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the midst of the streets.*

A third effect of sloth, is pusillanimity and faintness of heart, whereby the slothful man is overthrown, and discouraged by every contrariety or difficulty which he finds in virtue, or which he imagines to find therein. Which the scripture signifies when it says : *Eccl. xxii. In lapide luteo, lapidatus est piger.* The sluggard is pelted with a dirty stone, that is, he is overthrown with a difficulty of no importance. Again, *De stercore boum lapidatus est piger* ; the sluggard is pelted with the dung of oxen, which commonly is such a substance as can hardly do any hurt.

Pusillanimity.

A fourth effect of sloth, is idle laziness : which we see in many men that will talk and consult of this and that, about their amendment, but will excite nothing. Which is most aptly expressed by the Holy Ghost in these words : *Prov. xxvi. As the door turneth upon its hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.* And again : *Prov. xiii. The sluggard willeth and willeth not* : that is, he turns himself to and fro in his bed, and between willing and not willing, he does nothing. And yet further the scripture describes this laziness, saying : *Prov. xxvi. The slothful hideth his hand under his arm-pit, and it grieveth him to turn it to his mouth.*

Laziness.

All these and many more are the effects of sloth ; but these four especially have I thought good to touch in this place, because they greatly hinder this resolution which we talk of. For he that lives in a slumber, and will not hear or attend to anything that is said of the life to come : and fears to meet with great difficulties in the way ; and is thrown down by every little block that he finds ; and lastly, is so lazy, that he can bear no labour at all : this man, I say, is past hopes of being brought to any such resolution as we speak of.

To remove therefore this impediment, this sort of men ought to lay before their eyes the labours of our Saviour Christ and of his saints ; the exhortations they used to other men to take the like pains : the threats made in scripture against them

Means to remove sloth.

who labour not; the condition of our present warfare, that requires labour: the crown prepared for it; and the misery ensuing upon idle and lazy people. And finally, if they cannot bear the labour of a virtuous life, which is accompanied with so many consolations that it cannot rightly be called a labour, how will they abide the labour and torments of the damned in the life to come, which must be both intolerable and everlasting to them.

St. Paul says of himself and others, writing to the Thessalonians: that they worked in labour and weariness, both day and night, thereby to give an example of imitation. Christ in his parable went forth into the streets, several times in one day, and still reprehended grievously those that stood idle, saying: *Matt. xx. Why stand you here all the day idle? I am the true vine, says Christ, John xv. and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he will take away.* And in another place, speaking of the unprofitable tree, he says, *Luke xiii. Cut it down therefore; why doth it take up the ground?* And again: *Matt. xi. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.* For which cause the wise man also says: *Prov. xx. The slothful hand has wrought poverty, the hand of the strong gets riches.* And yet further to the same effect: *Prov. xx. Because of the cold the sluggard would not plough, he shall beg therefore in the summer, and it shall not be given him.*

All this aims to show how that this life is a time of labour, and not of idleness, being appointed to us for the gaining of heaven. It is the market, wherein we must buy; the battle, wherein we must fight and gain our crown; the winter, wherein we must sow; the day of labour, wherein we must sweat and gain our penny. And he that passes over lazily this day, as the greatest part of men do, must suffer eternal poverty and need in the long night to come, as more at large has been declared in the first part of this book. Wherefore the wise man (or rather the Holy Ghost by his mouth) gives each of us a most vehement admonition and exhortation in these words: *Prov. vi. Run about, make haste, stir up thy friend, give not sleep to thy eyes, neither let thy eye-lids slumber, deliver thyself as a doe from the hand, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler. Go to the ant, O sluggard, and*

The labours of saints

The conclusion.

consider her ways and learn wisdom : which although she has no guide, nor master, nor captain, provideth her meat for herself in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. By which words we are admonished in what order we ought to behave ourselves in this life ; and how diligent and careful we should be in doing all good works, considering, as the emmet labours most earnestly in harvest time, to lay up for the winter to come, so should we do for the next world ; and that slothfulness to this effect, is the greatest and most dangerous impediment that can be. For as the emmet would most certainly die of hunger in the winter, if she lived idly in the summer ; so, without all doubt, they are to suffer extreme need and misery in the world to come, who now out of sloth do omit to labour.

SECT. II. *Of negligence and carelessness.*

THE second impediment is called by me in the title of this chapter, negligence ; but I understand thereby more than this word commonly imports. For I comprehend under the name of negligent, all careless and dissolute people, who take nothing to heart that belongs to God or godliness, but only attend to worldly affairs, making their salvation the least part of their thoughts. And under this kind of negligence is contained both Epicurism (as St. Paul noted of some Christians in his days, *Rom. xvi.* who began only to attend to eat and drink, and to make their bellies their God, as many of our Christians now do,) and also a secret kind of Atheism, or denying God which is to deny him, not in words, but in life and behaviour, as St. Paul expounds it, *Titus i.* for although these men, of whom I speak, do, in words, confess God, and profess themselves to be as good Christians as the rest ; yet secretly indeed they not believe there is a God in such manner as they ought, especially with his attributes that are inseparable from him, as namely, his infinite knowledge, providence, care and disposition of human affairs, justice, judgment, and the like. These, I say, do not in effect believe, as their life and behaviour declare. Which secret the holy scripture discovers plainly, when it says, *Eccl. ii.* *Wo to them that are faint hearted, who believe not God.* That is, although they protest, that they believe and trust in him ; yet, by their dissolute and careless behaviour,

they testify that in their hearts they believe him not: for they have neither care nor thought of matters appertaining to him.

Of careless Atheists This kind of men, are those whom the scripture notes, *Deut. xxviii.* and detests for plowing with an ox and an ass together; for sowing their ground with mingled seed; for wearing apparel of linsey-woolsey, that is made of flax and wool together. These are they of whom Christ says in the revelations, *Apoc. iii. I would thou wert cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth:* These are they, who can accord all religions together, and take up with either side of the question, by only saying: that either they are differences of small importance, or else they appertain only to learned men to think on, and not to them, and that both parts do err somewhat, or may be agreed, and go both to heaven. These who can apply themselves to any company, to any time, to any prince's pleasure, even in matters of religion, which is their least care. These men forbid all talk of spirit, religion, or devotion in their presence; only they will have men eat, drink, and be merry with them: sing, dance, laugh, and play at cards; and so pass over this life in less consideration of God or godliness than do the very heathen. And has not holy writ great reason then, dear brother, to say that these men in their hearts and works are truly atheists? yes, surely. And it may be proved by many rules, set down by our Saviour himself. As for example, *Matt. vii. By their fruits ye shall know them.* For such as the tree is within, such is the fruit which that tree sends forth. Again, *Matt. xii. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;* and consequently, seeing these mens' talk is nothing but worldly vanity: it is an evident sign there is nothing in their heart but vanity. And then it follows also by a third rule: *Matt. vi. Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also:* and so consequently seeing their hearts are only set upon the world and worldly delights, the world is their only treasure, and not God; and therefore they may justly in this sense be termed atheists, or, to use the apostles phrase: *Ephes. ii. Having no hope of the promise, and without God in this world.*

This impediment, dear Christian, reaches both far and wide at this day, and infinite are the people who are entangled therewith; and the causes thereof are two especially. The first is division, schism, and heresy, in matters of our faith; which, by raising many doubts and questions, and by contentious quarreling which it maintains, wearies out a man's wit, and in the end brings him to care for no part, but rather to condemn all. The second is, inordinate love of the world, which brings men to hate God, and conceive enmity against him, and therefore no marvel, that indeed they never believe nor delight in him. And of all other men, these are the hardest to be reclaimed and brought to any resolution of amendment, because they are insensible: and besides, they fly all means whereby they may be cured. For, as there would be but small hope to be conceived of that patient who being grievously sick, should neither feel his disease nor believe that he was distempered, nor abide to hear of physic or physicians, nor accept of any counsel that should be offered, nor admit any talk or consultation about his curing: so these men are in a more dangerous state than any other; because they know not their own danger, but persuading themselves to be wiser than their neighbours, they remove from their thoughts all things whereby their health might be procured.

Two causes of Atheism at this day.

A comparison.

The only way to do these men good, if there be any way at all, is to make them know that they are sick and in great danger; which, in our case, may be done best, as it seems to me, by giving them to understand how far they are off from true christianity, and consequently from all hope of salvation that may be had thereby. God requires at our hands that we should love him and serve him, with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. These are the precise words of Almighty God, set down both in the old and new law.* And how far are these careless men short of this, who employ not the half of their heart, nor the half of their soul, nor the half of their strength, nay, nor the least part thereof, in God's service? God requires at our hands, that we should make his laws and precepts our study; that we should think of them continually, and meditate upon

The way to cure careless men.

* Deut. vi. Matt xxii. & Luke xxx.

them both day and night, at home and abroad, early and late, when we go to bed, and when we rise in the morning: this is the commandment, and there is no dispensation from it. But how far from this are these men, who bestow not the third part of their thoughts upon this matter, no, not the hundredth part, nor scarce once a year think thereof? Can these men say they are Christians, or that indeed they believe in *JESUS* our Saviour.

An Anti-thesis between true Christians and careless world-lings.

Christ making the estimate of things in this life, pronounced this sentence: *Unum est necssarium*; one only thing is necessary, or of necessity in this world, meaning thereby, the diligent and careful service of God. These men find many things necessary besides this one thing, and this not necessary at all. How far do they differ then in judgment from their Saviour Christ? Christ's apostle says, 1 *John* ii. That a Christian must neither love the world, nor any thing in the world. These men love nothing else, but that which is of the world. It is said again: *James* iv. *Whosoever therefore will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God.* These men are enemies to whosoever is not a friend to the world. How then can they be friends to God? Christ says, *Luke* xviii. *That we ought always to pray.* These men never pray. Christ's apostle says: *Ephes.* v. *That covetousness, uncleanness, or scurrility should not be so much as named among Christians.* These men have no other talk. Finally, the whole course and canon of scripture runs, that Christians should be attentive, vigilant, careful, fervent, and perseverant without intermission, in the service of their God. But these men have not one of these points or any one degree thereof, but in every one the contrary. For they are neither attentive to those things which appertain to God, nor solicitous, nor careful; and much less instant and fervent, and least of all, perseverant without intermission, because they never begin. But on the contrary, they are careless, negligent, lumpish, remiss, perverse, contemning, and despising, yea, loathing, and abhorring all matters that appertain to the mortifying of themselves and to the true service of God. What part have these men then in the lot and portion of Christians, besides only the bare name, which profits nothing.

And this is sufficient to show how great and dangerous an impediment this careless, senseless, and supine negligence is to the resolution whereof we treat; for if Christ requires, that whosoever spies once out the treasure hidden in the field, (which is the kingdom of heaven, and the right way to gain it,) should, presently go and sell all that he has and buy the field: that is to say, that he should prefer the pursuit of this kingdom of heaven before all the commodities of this life whatsoever; and rather venture them, than to omit gaining this treasure, if Christ, I say, requires this, as he does; when will these men ever be brought to this point, who will not give the least part of their goods to purchase that field, nor go forth of their doors to treat about the buying thereof, nor will so much as think or talk of the same, nor hearken to him who offers the means and ways to compass it.

The danger of a careless man.

Wherefore, whosoever finds himself in this perilous disease, I would counsel him to read some chapter of the first part of this book; especially the second, fourth, and fifth, treating of the causes for which we were sent into this world; as also of the account which we must yield to God, of the time we have spent here; and he will there understand, I doubt not, the error and danger he stands in, by this damnable negligence wherein he sleeps; attending only to those things which are mere vanities, and for which he came not into this world, and passing over other matters without care or concern, which notwithstanding are the only matters of importance, and most necessary for all men to employ their whole care and study in.

The conclusion.

SECT. III. *Of hardness of heart and how dangerous it is.*

THE third and last impediment that I purpose to handle in this book, is a certain affection, or evil disposition in some men, called by the scriptures, *Hardness of Heart*, or in other words, obstinacy of mind, whereby a man is settled in resolution, never to turn from the state of sin wherein he lives, whatsoever can or may be said against the same. And I have reserved this impediment for the last place in this book, because it is the last and worst of all other impediments discovered before, containing all the evil in it,

self that any of the others before rehearsed have; and adding to the same, besides, a wilful and malicious resolution of sin, quite contrary to that resolution which we so much endeavour to induce men unto.

This hardness of heart has divers degrees in divers men, and in some, much more grievous and perilous than in others. For some are arrived to that high obduration which I named before, in such sort, that although they know they are in the

Two degrees of hardness of heart.

wrong, yet for some worldly respect or other, they will not yield nor change their course, say or prove whatsoever you will or can. Such was the obduration of Pilate, *Matt. xxvii.* who, although he knew well that he condemned our Saviour Christ wrongfully; yet, not to lose the favour of the Jews, or incur displeasure with his prince, he proceeded and gave that most wicked sentence against him. This also was the obduration of Pharaoh, *Exod. vi. & vii.* who, though he saw the miracles of Moses and Aaron, and felt the strong hand of God upon his kingdom; yet not to seem to be overcome by such simple people as they were, nor that men should think he would be forced by any means to relent; he persevered still in his wilful wickedness, till his last and utter destruction came upon him. This hardness of heart was also in king Agrippa, and in Felix, governor of Jewry, *Acts xxvi. & xxvii.* who, though in their own consciences they thought that St. Paul spoke truth to them, yet not to hazard their credit in the world, they continued still and perished in their own vanities. And commonly this obduration is in all persecutors of virtue and virtuous men, whom although they seem

Persecutors.

evidently to be innocent, and to have equity on their side; yet to maintain their credit and favour in the world, persist, without either mercy or release, till God cuts them off in the midst of their malice and cruel designs.

A second degree of obduration.

Others there are who have not this obduration in so high a degree, as to persist in wickedness directly against their own knowledge, but yet they have it in another sort; for they are settled in a firm purpose to follow the method which they have already begun, and will not understand the dangers thereof, but seek rather means to persuade themselves and quiet their consciences therein, and nothing is so offensive

to them as to hear things against the same. Of these men holy Job says, *Job xxi. Who have said to God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* And the prophet David yet more expressly : *Psalms lvii. Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent : like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ear : which will not hear the voice of the charmer.* By this enchanter, he means the Holy Ghost, who seeks to charm them and draw them from the pleasures, called by the wise man, *Sap. iv. fasciatio nugacitatis* ; the bewitching of vanity. But, as the prophet says, *Zach. vii. They would not hearken, and they turned away their shoulder to depart : and they stopp'd their ears not to hear. And they made their heart as the adamant stone, lest they should hear the law.*

The nation of Jews is peculiarly noted to have been always given to this great sin, as St. Stephen witnesses, when he said to their own faces, *Acts vii. With a stiff neck, &c. you always resist the Holy Ghost ; as your fathers did, so do you also ;* meaning thereby, as Christ declares more at large, that they resisted the prophets and saints of God, by whom the Holy Ghost spoke to them from time to time, for the amendment of their lives. And because through the light of knowledge which they had by hearing of God's law, they could not in truth, or with show of reason condemn the things which were said, or avoid the just reprehensions used towards them : yet they resolved not to obey or change their proceedings : therefore they fell in fine to persecute sharply their reprovers, whereof the only cause was hardness of heart. God says by the mouth of Jeremiah, *Jer. v. They have made their faces harder than the rock, and they have refused to return.* And in another place of the same prophet, he complains grievously of this perverseness : *Jer. viii. Why then is this people in Jerusalem turned away with a stubborn revolting, &c.* And yet again in another place *Ezek. xviii. Why will ye die, O house of Israel ? Why will you damn yourselves ? why are you so obstinate as not to hear ; so perverse as not to learn ? so cruel to yourselves, that you will not know the danger wherein you live, nor understand the misery that hangs over you.*

Dost thou not imagine, dear brother, that God uses

*The hard
hearted
Jews.*

this kind of speech, not only to the Jews, but also to many thousand Christians, and perhaps, also to thyself many times every day, because thou refusest his good motions, and other means sent from him to draw thee to his service, being resolved not to yield thereunto, but to follow thy pleasures, notwithstanding whatsoever persuasions to the contrary? Alas, how many Christians are there, who say to God daily, (as those whom I have named before did,) *Job. xxi. Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* How many are there that abhor to hear good books, fly and detest the frequenting of good company, lest, perhaps, by such occasions they might be touched, and so be converted and saved? How many are there who say with these most unfortunate hard-hearted men, whereof the prophet speaks: *Isa. xxviii. We have entered into a league with death, and we have made a covenant with hell.* Which is in effect as much as if they had said, trouble us not, molest us not with thy persuasions, spend not thy words and labour in vain, talk to others who are not yet settled, let them take heaven that will, we for our part are resolved, we have made a league that must be kept, we have made a bargain that must be performed, yea, though it be with hell and everlasting death.

The obduracy of a hard heart is a wonderful madness, and not without cause compared by the prophet, as I have shown before, to the wilful fury and rage of serpents. And in another place the holy scriptures describes it thus: *Isa. xli.*

Thou art stubborn, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy forehead of brass. What can be more vehemently spoken to express the hardness of their heart? But yet St. Bernard expresses it more at large in these words: ‘And what is then a hard heart: A hard heart is that which is neither rent by compunction, nor softened by devotion, nor moved with prayers, nor yields to threatening, nor is anything helped, but rather hardened by chastising. A hard heart is that which is ungrateful to God’s benefits, disobedient to his counsels, made cruel by his judgments, dissolute by his allurements, without shame of filthiness, fearless of perils, arrogant in human affairs. Careless in matters appertaining to God, forgetful of things past, negligent in things present, improvident for things to come.’

*God cries
unto us
daily.*

*The description
of a hard
heart.*

By the description of St. Bernard, it appears that a hard heart is almost a desperate disease wherever it falls. For what will you do, says this father, to amend it? if you lay the grievousness of his sins before him, he is not touched with compunction. If you allege him all the reasons in the world why we ought to serve God, and why we ought not to offend and dishonour him; he is not mollified by his consideration of piety. If you would entreat and beseech him with tears, even on your knees; he is not moved. If you threaten God's wrath against him, he yields nothing thereunto. If God scourges him, indeed: he is furious and becomes much harder than before. If God bestows benefits on him; he is ungrateful, if he counsels him for his salvation, he obeys not. If you tell him of God's secret and severe judgments, it drives him to despair. If you assure him of God's mercy, it makes him dissolute. If you tell him of his own filthiness, he blushes not. If you admonish him of his perils, he fears not. If he deals in worldly matters, he is proud and arrogant. If he deals in matters appertaining to God; he is rash, light, and contemptuous. Finally, he forgets whatsoever has passed before him in regard to other men, concerning the rewards of the good, or the punishment of sinners. For the time present he neglects it, and makes no account of using it to his benefit. And as for things to come, for bliss or misery, he is utterly improvident; nor will esteem them, lay them never so often or vehemently before his face. And what way is there then to do this man good?

The explanation of St. Bernard's words.

Not without great cause surely, did the wise man pray heartily to God: *Eccl. xxiii. Give me not over to a shameless and foolish mind*: that is, unto a hard and obstinate heart. Whereof he gives the reason in another place of the same book: *Eccl. iii. A hard heart shall fare evil at the last: and he that loveth danger shall perish in it.* Oh that all hard hearted people would note this reason of the scripture! But St. Bernard goes on and opens the terror heretof more fully, when he says: * 'There was never yet a hard hearted man saved, except perchance God, by his mercy, did take away his stony heart, and give him a heart of flesh, ac-

The danger of a hard heart.

* Lib. 1. de confid. c. 2.

Two kinds of hearts in men, with their properties.

‘ cording to the prophet.’ By which words St. Bernard signifies and proves out of the prophet, that there are two kinds of hearts in men; the one a fleshy heart, which bleeds if you prick it; that is, it falls to contrition, repentance, and tears, upon never so small a check for sin. The other is a stony heart, which if you beat never so much with hammers, you may as soon break it in pieces as either bend it or make it bleed. And of these two hearts in this life, depends all our misery or felicity for the life to come. For as God, when he would take vengeance of Pharaoh, had no more grievous way to do it, than to say, *Exod. ix.* I will harden the heart of Pharaoh; that is, as St. Augustine expounds it,* I will take away my grace, and so permit him to harden his own heart; so when he would show mercy to Israel, he had not more forcible means to express it than to say, *Ezek. xxxvi.* *I will take away the stony heart out of thy flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh.* That is to say, I will take away your hard heart, and give you a soft heart, that will be moved when it is spoken to. And of all other blessings and benefits which God bestows upon mortal man in this life, this soft and tender heart is one of the greatest; I mean such a heart as is soon checked and controlled, soon pierced, soon made to bleed, soon stirred to amendment. And on the contrary, there can be no greater curse, or malediction, laid upon a Christian, than to have a hard and obstinate heart, which heaps every day vengeance to itself, as St. Paul says; and is compared by the same apostle, to the ground which no store of rain can make fruitful, although it fall never so often upon it: and therefore he pronounces thereof, *Heb. vi.* *That’ it is rejected, and very near to a curse; whose end, is to be burnt.*

The conclusion.

Which things being so, no wonder the holy scripture does so carefully dissuade us from this obduration and hardness of heart, as from the most dangerous and desperate disease that can possibly fall upon a Christian, being indeed, as St. Paul signifies, *Heb. vi.* the next door to reprobation itself. The same apostle therefore cries out. *Ephes. iv.* Do not grieve or make sad, do not extinguish the spirit of God by obdu-

* Aug. 18. super *Exod.* & *Ser. 88. de Tem.*

ration, by resisting and impugning the same. And again. *Heb. iii.* Let no man among you be hardened through the deceit of sin. The prophet David also cries: *Psal. xciv.* 'To-day, if you shall hear his voice, (the voice of God calling you to repentance,) harden not your hearts. All which earnest speeches used by God's holy spirit, give you to understand how carefully we ought to fly this most pestilent infection of a hard heart; which Almighty God, of his mercy, give us grace to do, and endue us with a tender heart, that we may fully obey his divine majesty. Such a soft heart, I say, as the wise man desires, when he said to God: *3 Reg. iii.* Give to thy servant a docile heart. Such a heart as God himself describes to be in all them whom he loves, saying: *Isa. lxvi.* To whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words.'

Behold, dear brother, what a heart God requires at thy hands: a poor, and humble heart, also a contrite heart, for thy offences past: and a heart that trembles at every word that comes to thee from God by his ministers. How then wilt thou not tremble at so many words, and whole discourses as has been used before to awake thee to denounce thy peril, to stir thee to amendment? how wilt thou not fear the threats and judgments of this great Lord? how wilt thou dare to proceed any further in his displeasure? how wilt thou defer this resolution any longer? surely the least part of that which has been said, might suffice to move a tender heart, and humble and contrite spirit, to make a present resolution for the amendment of life. But if all together cannot move thee to do it, I can say no more, but that thou hast a very hard heart indeed, which I beseech our heavenly Father to soften, for thy salvation, and the precious blood of his only Son our Saviour, who was content to shed it for that effect upon the cross.

*What
heart
God re-
quires in
us.*

SECT. IV. *Containing the conclusion of the whole Book, with an Exhortation.*

HAVING now said as much as time permitted me, concerning the first general point required of us for our salvation; that is, concerning resolution, which was appointed

by my division in the beginning, to be the subject and matter of this first book : I will here make an end, deferring for a time the performance of my purpose, for the other two books, upon the causes and reasons set down in the beginning, not doubting, but if Almighty God will vouchsafe to work in any man's heart, by means of this book or otherwise, this first point of resolution, the most hard of all others ; he will also give means to perfect the same work, begun by himself, and will supply, by other ways, the two points following : that is to say, both a right beginning and a constant perseverance, whereunto the other two books I promised, are appointed. Neither would it be hard, for any man that was once truly resolved, to find helpers and instructors enough, (besides the Holy Ghost, who in this case will always be ready with his divine assistance,) to forward him in his holy enterprise, although these two other books of mine should never come forth. We want not at this day, our merciful Lord be glorified for it, either store of goods, nor skilful men in our own country, that are well able to guide a zealous spirit, in the right way to virtue. And, yet, as I have promised before; so I mean, by God's holy help and assistance, to send thee, Christian reader, the other two books also ; especially, if it pleases his divine majesty to encourage me thereunto, with the gain or good of any one soul, by this which is already done ; that is to say, if I shall understand, conceive, or hope that any one soul, purchased by the precious blood of the Son of God, has been moved to resolution by anything that is here said or has been reclaimed from the bondage of sin, and restored to the service of our Maker and Redeemer, which is the only end of my writing, as his divine majesty knows best.

And truly, dear Christian, although I confess, that much more might be said for this point of Resolution, than is here touched by me, or that any man can well utter in any component kind of book or volume : yet I am of opinion that

The effect of that which has been said in this book. either these reasons here alleged are sufficient, or else nothing will suffice for the conquering of our obstinacy, and beating down our rebellious disobedience in this point. Here thou mayest see and read the principal arguments, inducing thee to the service of God, and detesting of vice. here thou mayest behold first, that of necessity thou must confess there is a God that made thee

In the first part.

and all other things ; the end and cause why he created thee, which is to serve him, by fulfilling Christ's holy commandments ; what things are required at thy hands in particular ; the account that will be demanded of thee ; the justice and severity of God therein, his goodness towards thee, watchfulness over thee, his desire to win thee, his reward if thou dost well, his infinite punishments if thou dost evil ; his calls, his promises, his allurements to save thee. And on the contrary, here are discovered to thee the vanities, and deceit of these impediments, hindrances or excuses, which any way might stop or discourage thy resolution ; the feigned hardships of a virtuous life are removed : the imaginary difficulties in God's service are taken away : the alluring flatteries of wordly vanities are laid open : the foolish presumption upon God's mercy, the danger of delay, the dissimulation of sloth, the desperate perils of careless and stony hearts are laid open. What then wilt thou desire more to move thee ? what other argument wilt thou expect to draw thee from vice and wickedness.

In the second part.

If all this stir thee not, what will move thee ? if when thou hast read this, thou layest down the book again, and walk on in thy careless life, as quietly as before : what hope, I beseech thee, can there be conceived of thy salvation ? Wilt thou go to heaven living as thou dost ? it is impossible. 'Thou mayest as soon drive God out of heaven, as get thither thyself, by this kind of life. What then ? wilt thou forego heaven, and think to escape hell also ? this is less possible, whatsoever the atheists of this world do persuade thee. Wilt thou perhaps defer the matter, and think of it hereafter ? I have told thee my opinion concerning the danger of this delay. Thou wilt never have more ability to do it than now, and perhaps never half so much. If thou refusedst it now, I greatly fear, that thou wilt be refused hereafter thyself. There is no way then so good, dear brother, as to do it presently whilst it is offered. Break from that tyrant, which detains thee in servitude ; shake off his chains, cut asunder his bands, run violently to *CHRIST*, who stands ready to embrace thee with his arms open on the Cross. Make all the angels, and court of heaven, joyful with thy conversion ; take a manly resolution : say with that old courageous soldier of

JESUS CHRIST, St. Hierom : ‘ If my father

A notable saying of St. Hierom. ‘ stood weeping on his knees before me, and my mother hanging on my neck behind me; and all my brethren, sisters, children, and kinsfolks howling on every side to detain me in a sinful life with them : I would fling off my mother to the ground, despise all my kindred, run over my father and tread him under my feet, thereby to run to **CHRIST** when he calls me And this is the greatest kind of piety above all others in this point to show ourselves cruel.’

An exhortation. Oh that we had such hearts dear Christian, as this servant of God had, such courage, such resolution, such fervent love of our master. Who would lay one day drowned in sin? Who would live one day in such slavery as we do? Who would eat husks with the prodigal son among swine, seeing he may return home, and be so honorably received, and entertained by his own father, have so good cheer and banquetting, and hear so great melody, joy and triumph for his return? I say no more concerning this, dear brother, than thou art assured of, by the words and promises of God’s own mouth, from which neither falsehood nor deceit can proceed. Return, then, I beseech thee, lay hold of his promise, who will not fail thee; run to him now he calls, whilst thou hast time, and esteem not all this world worth a straw, in respect of this one act. For so shalt thou be most happy, and thrice happy man, and shalt bless hereafter the hour and moment that ever thou madest this fortunate resolution. And for my part, I confide, I shall not be void of some share of thy good and felicity. At least I doubt not, but the holy conversion will obtain for me from our common father, who is the God of mercies, remission of my many sins, and that I may serve and honour him, together with thee, all the days of my life; which ought to be the petition of us both. And therefore in both our names I beseech his divine majesty to grant it unto us, for his dear Son our Lord and Saviour **JESUS CHRIST’S** sake. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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